

Jesus the Faithful Friend

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Date: 07 August 2022

[0 : 0 0] This week we started a new series in Kids Church called In Christ. And I'm thoroughly excited about it. Not more than excited, but thoroughly excited about it. But this series called In Christ, I guess we know this.

It's a theological thing. But when you get saved and you trust Jesus, you are placed in Jesus. You are placed in Christ. And, you know, we say he's identified with this in his death and his burial and resurrection.

That's true. But when we think about the ramifications of it, we've been included in that. In his death, Jesus, Bible says, I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I. Included in his resurrection, in the life, in his ascension, in his glorification.

All these great things Jesus includes us in. So for the next nine weeks in Kids Church, we're going to be talking about learning to be in Christ. Life in Christ. Why it's so important. Why it's such a big deal.

And there's a lot of great truth about that. That being said, this morning we have to start the first message. And that was in John chapter number 15. And let me see. My rising sixth graders, where were they?

[0 : 5 8] Luther, Madison, Natalie, Carson, let me see. Bryce. Anybody else I miss because I'm giddy? Randall, come on up here. I got a gift for you guys. I have this nice, nice designer t-shirt designed by yours truly.

But this is a shirt and it may seem goofy for you. And I got a large t-shirt for Maddie. She can get a different size after. But come on up here, guys. Come on up here. So this is just a little something.

But it's a truth I want you guys to remember. In John 15, Jesus is about to go up and be crucified. It's actually like his last few moments on earth. If you know the story, Judas is already kind of left to go tattletale on.

He's cashing out right then and there. What Jesus is, he's eating the last supper and he just finishes it. And as he finishes it, we're eating with his disciples. He says something. He gets up and they're still talking. And out of anything he can say, out of all of his last words, he looks at them and he begins saying, Abide in me.

If you put up John 15, verse 5. Because I can't give you guys any more life advice. You come from great families. You guys know the word. You've grown up in church. God has done miracles in your life.

[2 : 0 4] But I'm going to give you the same thing that Jesus told his disciples. He's the vine. You are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me, you can do nothing. You guys are getting ready to go into life.

You've finished elementary school. You're going to go into middle school. And the best advice I can give you is abide. Stay plugged into Jesus. Love him. Let him be your Lord and let him be your life. Just like the vine without that branch is dead or the branch without that vine is dead.

In our life, if we're not plugged into Jesus, nothing's really going to happen. So whatever you guys do, stay plugged in, in love, committed to Jesus. And you guys are going to get one of these that's your size after church.

And I want to get a picture with you guys all in our matching shirts. But here you go. I'm so excited for all y'all. Make some noise for these guys. They're going to be exciting. All right. You guys can go back to your seats now.

That being said, John 15, we'll go back to it. John 15. We'll be in the latter part of this story. John 15. Jesus has just finished the Lord's Supper.

[3 : 05] John 13 through 17 in our Bible. We have chapters and verses. It's really cool. But in this story, John 13 through 17, it all flows together. That's all one hour or two per se.

That's one meal and one conversation after. It's known. If we want to get nerdy, it's called the Upper Room Discourse. Come to find out. That's Jesus. They're talking about his last moments on earth.

And he knows his time is coming. He's known for quite a while. But we're quite literally hearing his last words. He's already outlined our relationship with him with the vine. He says, abide in me and I and you. You'll be fruitful. That's cool.

He outlines our relationship with him in the first 11 verses. Gives us instruction on how to abide, how to be plugged in, how to be fruitful, how to have God work in your life. Tells us all that. So the first part of it is he tells us about how to abide and what our relationship with him should look like.

But then he's going to tell us not just that, how our relationship should be with each other. And then also how our relationship should be with the world. And I think this is such a fitting truth for these young people getting ready to go to school who have already gone to school.

[4 : 03] You guys got to understand something. This story, the disciples have lived with Jesus for the past three plus years. I mean, the apostle Peter, Jesus was helping him with his taxes. They ate together. They slept in the same quarters.

They spent time together. Jesus showed them how to teach and miracles and Old Testament truths and all these things like that. They spent the past three years with Jesus and is getting ready to die and ascend. Something was going to change, right?

It may be difficult to understand, but I mean, they've been with them physically. And there's some things getting ready to change. How would they continue in life, right? If I was Jesus, I'd be giving Peter his Pentecost sermon notes or, you know, giving John some book of the Bible writing advice or something like that.

But he doesn't. He gives him the advice to abide. And after he gives him the advice to abide, he says this in verse number 12. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.

So he tells them to abide and he gives them some advice. They should love one another as he has loved them. He's described their relationship with him. Now he's going to describe what their relationship should be with each other.

[5 : 03] This is such a comforting passage. Growing up, I guess my parents would always say you need to watch you become friends with, right? Watch you become friends with because that's what's going to influence you. Well, something really, really comforting is in the Bible we come to find out that Jesus calls us his friends.

That's something really encouraging. Let's read the Bible. John 15, 12. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man may lay down his life for his friends.

Verse number 14. You are my friends if you do whatsoever I commanded you. 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 you have heard of that I've heard of my father.

I've made known unto you. Verse 16. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go forth and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain, and that whatsoever you ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you that you love one another. And if the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you were not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

[6 : 07] That's incredible. Jesus calls us his friends. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this day. I thank you for your goodness, Lord. I thank you for your word. I thank you for your kindness and mercy. God, thank you for calling us friends, not servants.

Thank you for showing us friendship, Lord. Thank you for showing us love. God, I pray that you help us carry the truths of being your friend into life, into ministry, into wherever you take us, Lord. Help us live like you are our friend.

Lord, we love you. In your name I pray. Amen. Something really, really encouraging here. First things first, we're going to see friendship with Christ. We already read it here, but this may sound simple, but it's a pretty big deal.

Jesus really likes us. He really loves you. He really cares about you. He is really a friend. Let's check out what the Bible says. First thing is he said in John 15, chapter 9, back towards the vine.

He says this, As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. Jesus says it outright. As the Father loves me, so I love you. That is an encouraging truth.

[7 : 02] Jesus really likes you. He really loves you. He really is concerned about you. He really does care. Not only did he just say it, but he also proved it. Romans 5, 8 reads this.

It's a simple truth. We know it. But God committed his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. John 15, 13, he'd even go on to say this. Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down his life for his friends.

Guys, biblical truth here. Jesus loves you. And he is your friend. He really cares about you. And he extended that friendship. And he showed it. He told us about it. And he did it on the cross. He chose us.

Look what the Bible says in John 15, 12. Not only has he extended friendship and showed it, but not just that. We can leave here knowing he loves us. He cares about us. But he also chose us and picked us. John 15, 12 even reads this.

This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. 15, 16 would go on to say, you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you that you should not, that you should go forth and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain. Now whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it unto you.

[8 : 03] I want you to know this. Jesus picked that group of ragtag men to love and to be with and to spend time with, who the Pharisees would say he spends time with publicans and sinners, really? But Jesus loved that group of men.

And if he loved that ragtag group of men, he also loves us, a church of redeemed sinners. 1 John 4, 10, this is God picking us. Look at what the Bible says. Here in his love that we love not God, but he loved us and sent his son to repitiation for our sins.

And we come to find out not just our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. Jesus is the God of love. He is our friend. He says so. He models so. He demonstrated it in the cross. He showed it.

And just like he picked his group of disciples to love and to minister to and to be with and to call his friends, guys, he's died for us too. And he is too our friend. We can know he loves us and he cares. That's great.

1 John 4, 19 even reads this. We love him because he first loved us. How great is that? Jesus put forth his hand first. Oh, we weren't looking for him. The Bible says we were enemies with God, separated from him, not looking for him.

[9 : 01] We were corrupt in our mind. Jesus loved us first. He is a real, true friend. Because a friend is not to somebody who cares about you when you're doing good.

But a friend loves you even when you're not doing good. And Jesus modeled and exemplified this on the cross. Not just that. That's real grace. Jesus loved and saved the worst.

We didn't deserve it. We didn't do anything for it. But he still modeled friendship. And because Jesus calls us his friends, because there's a real friendship and relationship there, we can press into that.

There's real fellowship. Look at what the Bible says in 1 John 1, verse 3. That's what we have seen and we have heard. We declare unto you that you may have saw fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ.

We have fellowship with Jesus Christ. Fellowship is something sweet. Because fellowship is togetherness. It's being united. It's unity. It's being with. Fellowship is a great thing.

[9 : 54] We have fellowship with Jesus Christ. That's comforting. Not just that. There's a soft ear. Have you guys ever been in a situation when it's hard, you don't know what to do, you're confused, you're hurt, you're stressed, anxious, concerned, whatever it may be.

And you just want somebody to listen to you. You just want somebody to talk to. You just want somebody who you can vent to, per se. Who you can pour things out to. Look what the Bible says in 1 Peter 5, 7 about our relationship with Christ.

Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. Not only is he a friend who shows love, not only is he a friend who put forth the effort there, he's a friend who offers fellowship. But he's a soft ear we can go to.

Kids, you guys go to school and I don't know if school's changed since I was a kid, but I remember not liking school very much. You guys go there and you want somebody to vent to or somebody to pray to. You're asking God to do some miracles, asking God to do something.

Jesus really cares. And adults, when you go to work, you're in life, you're going through trials, different things, storms, whatever. Jesus really cares. He's a real friend. But not only does he care with the soft ear, compassionate, caring, loving, all that good stuff.

[10 : 55] He's also faithful. He doesn't leave. Look what the Bible says in Hebrews 13, 5 about the friendship of our Lord. Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things you have.

For he had said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. He is a friend who's never going to leave you high and dry. A friend who's always going to pick up the phone per se. A friend who's always going to listen. A friend who's always going to care.

Who's always concerned. Jesus really cares about you. And he's never going to leave you or forsake you. That's comforting. He calls us his friend. Because he's our friend, there's some benefits we can press into there.

And that is a great, great truth. The whole earlier part about this passage about abiding. You know, he invites his disciples to abide. Is that not great? Because, I mean, I know living situation, nobody wants to abide with somebody they really don't like.

But Jesus invites his disciples to abide with him. He really likes you. He really cares about you. He really loves you. Jesus really likes you. That's an incredible thing. As the Father loves him, he loves us.

[11 : 54] But not only that, there's friendship with Christ. Jesus is our friend. He calls us friends. That's comforting. The fact that God Almighty will call sinners like us his friends.

That he would save people like us. That's comforting. But not just that. There's also fellowship with Christ, too. There's fellowship where we get fellowship from Christ. You know, in life, with your friendship, it brings certain allegiances, per se.

Prime example. I don't own a truck, nor have I ever owned a pickup truck. But in my family, Lamar drives a Dodge Ram, okay? And I found things that started happening. It was weird. I don't even like working on trucks. But I saw Ford pulled over on the road the other day.

I said, found the road dead. Got him. But I don't even like pickup trucks like that. But here's the thing. My fellowship with Lamar has caused certain things, needed me to like certain things in life, per se.

So when I see a Chevy broke down, I got him. It's Chevy. Should have got it Ram. I don't even know anything about pickup trucks. But in my time being spent with him, I've started to like certain things. Certain things started to pop out to me.

[12 : 51] Certain allegiances have been formed there. I guess if I ever buy a pickup truck, it'll probably be a Ram. And all the Ford guys, I don't know, whatever you guys do. With that being said, friendship brings different allegiances.

Look what the Bible says in John 15, 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. When you love somebody, you kind of start to like and love what they like. You kind of start the things that they really enjoy, you start to enjoy.

Things that they really like to do, you start to enjoy doing. And friendship brings allegiance. One, as Christians and believers, we should love what he loves. We should love what Jesus loves.

And there's a few things that the Bible tells us very explicitly that God loves. First things first is God loves his people. John 13, 35 says this, By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

Christians, we should be loving. We should love church. We should love each other. We should love other believers. We should look for it. We should love believers because Jesus loves them. And the Bible says that Christians should love. He actually says earlier in this chapter, Continue ye in my love.

[13 : 51] Not just that. We should love his church. And let's learn how we should love. Look what the Bible says about loving other people. It's a sacrificial love. 1 John 3, 16 says this, Hereby we perceive we love God because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

I want you guys to check this out. When Jesus showed his love for me and he showed his love for us, we weren't really looking for it. We really weren't doing the best. We really weren't on his side. The Bible actually says we were his enemies.

But he showed forth that love, not requiring us to put forth anything. He showed that love when we were at odds against him. He showed that love sacrificially, and his believers were implored to have the same love for each other and for people.

We need to treat people just like Jesus did too. Because of that friendship and that closeness with Christ, we should love people. Look what the Bible says about how we should love believers. Colossians 3, 13.

Let's read this together. For bearing one another and forgiving one another, if you didn't have a quarrel against thee, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. I got to sit down with a friend of mine, and we were just talking from school, and we were just talking, like catching up, like, hey man, what about this person, this person?

[14 : 59] And he goes, they're dead to me. I was like, man, that's really intense. Like, what did they do to you for you to emotionally kill them off, you know? Like, what did they, I don't know, did they hurt you real bad? I don't know what happened, but you said they're dead to me.

You emotionally killed them, which is not biblical. It's not Christ-like. It's not Christian. We should forbear one another. As Christ has forgiven us, believers, Christians, that thing that we can't forgive somebody for is already covered by the blood of Jesus, and we should forgive them for it.

Believers, if we have a hard time loving people, it's really difficult to look at a person and know that Jesus loves them. Extend that love. Love them. Put forth the love. As believers, as Jesus has forgiven them, we should forgive each other.

As Jesus forbears us, and when we mess up, we should also forbear them and love them. That is what we're commanded to do as believers, and that is the love that Christ has placed in us. Christians are loving.

We care about each other. We forbear one another, and that friendship with Christ should make us love the church, love his people, love each other, care about each other, because that's what Jesus did. We love what he loves.

[16 : 03] He loves his church so much that he bought it with his own blood. He loves believers so much that he bought it with his own blood. We should really care about each other as a church, but not just that. As Christians, we should also love souls, because let's look at what this passage says.

John 15, 16 says this. You've not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go forth and bring much fruit, that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Jesus was sending these guys out into the world to reap fruit. Jesus loves the souls of people. If you haven't noticed, John chapter 3, verse 16, for God so loved the world that he gave.

We should love the souls of people just like Jesus did. You guys are getting ready to go to school, and your friendship with Jesus should cause the way you look at your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers, your colleagues, you should see them as a soul that Jesus loves, as an opportunity to share the gospel of Christ with someone, an opportunity to minister to somebody.

Look what said of the Apostle Paul in those he tried to reach in Acts chapter 20, verse 31. Therefore, watch, remember, that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

[17 : 04] The Apostle Paul loved the people that he got the opportunity to evangelize, share the gospel with so much that he did it night and day for three years with tears. It's a love. It's a love for their souls.

It's a love for people. Believers, as we go out, we should have a love for the church and each other, but also we should have a love for souls. Jesus loves the souls of men. God loves the world. And you know what the Bible also teaches us?

Jesus has also sent us into this world. John 17, 18 reads this, As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. If you're here, and you're a believer, you're called to love the church, Jesus is your friend, but we should love the world.

Why do we send missionaries? Because Jesus loves the world. Why do we want to share the gospel with our friends at school? Because Jesus loves the world. Why do we have events and we invite people in and light off, I don't know, whatever the budget is on fireworks? Because Jesus loves the world.

We want people to know the gospel. But not just that, also certain friendships entail not liking certain things too. And because of that, friendship with Christ also entails us, we may love the world, we may love the people in the world, but as believers and Christians, we don't love the world per se.

[18 : 13] We don't love the world and insist in things that are against God. Look at what the Bible says in 1 John 4, verse 5, They are of this world, therefore they are of this world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

James 4, 2 would say this, or 4, 4 would say, Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

If we are friends with the world, if we love the world, we were committed to the world, there's not really room in that relationship with Jesus. There can only be really one. And here's the thing, as believers, we should love Jesus more than this world.

We love people in the world, but we do not love this world and sin. Friendship with Christ entails us loving things that he loves, things that he likes, things that are holy, staying close to him. But not only is there friendship in Jesus, there's fellowship from Jesus, but then our focus in life shifts to being found in him.

Did you know that Jesus is, he changes our focus and our priorities because that's what a good friend does? Look what the Bible says. You know Jesus is a friend that sharpens us. Proverbs 27, 17 says this, iron sharpens the thorns, so that this man sharpened the countenance of his friend.

[19 : 25] You know Jesus is a really good friend and he sharpens us. You know, look what the Bible says in John 15, 15, henceforth I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for in all things I have heard of my Father, check this out, I have made known unto you.

You know Jesus leaves us with some words, some truth, some Bible, some gospel, some instructions in life. That's incredible. He gave revelation. John 1, 14 would say this, and the word was made flesh.

Name for Jesus is the word of God. That is who he is. He let us know God. And we know God by Jesus. 1 Timothy 2, 5 would say this, there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

So Jesus gets ready to go up and off to be crucified. He says, I've told you, I've introduced you to God. I've given you the scriptures. I've given you word. I've given you Bible. And that's what he leaves them with. And that's weird. That's what we have.

We know God by Jesus. And Hebrews 1, 2 even says this, in these last days, he's spoken unto us by his son. We'll go on to say that Jesus is the express image of God. He's the revelation of God.

[20 : 24] Jesus is God. And that is incredible. He's a sharpening friend. He changes our focus. He left us his word. But not just that. You know, he calls us instead of servants.

He calls us friends. And that's something really comforting. Because religion has servants and religion has slaves. But our relationship with Christ brings us to the point of being friends. And that's so comforting.

1 John 14, or John 15, 14 says this, You are my friends if you 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 have I made known unto you.

Check this out. For we obey God not because we have to, not because we're forced to, because we got to, but we do it because we got to. Because he's our friend. Because we love him. Because we love his word.

Because we care about him. As the Bible says in John chapter 14, if we love him, we'll keep his commandments. If we care about him. That's what, as his friends, that's what we're going to do. He's called us friends, not servants.

[21 : 24] The difference between a servant and a friend is not between diligent obedience and disobedience, or even casual obedience for that fact. The difference is between understanding and not understanding. Because we as friends have that close relationship with God, because Jesus is our friend and has given us scriptures and things to do, we can obey and understand while we do it.

We are friends, not servants. That is incredible. Friends have a close relationship while servants don't. I don't know if you know that. Jesus said this at a time in which like servants were pretty common.

You know, most of the Roman Empire was made up of servants is what people say. But he looks at these disciples, the people who follow him around, he says, you're not servants, you're friends. He says, I'm going to explain to you the scriptures and why you do what you're doing.

You're going to have understanding why you do this. Calls them friends. But not just that, there's also fruitfulness in friendship with Jesus Christ. When we love him and our priority, when we love him and his priority as a result of that is fruitfulness.

That is so comforting. He spent the first part of this chapter talking about if you abide in me and I and you, the end result's fruit. That's why I put it on a t-shirt. But the end result of that is fruit. And look what the Bible says here.

[22 : 30] It says this in chapter and verse number 16, that you should go forth and bring forth fruit that your fruit should remain. We can really go serve Jesus in this world and there's real rewards and fruit and growth and God is glorified according to verse 8 in this chapter from that fruitfulness.

The only part about this chapter is about abiding. And guys, check this out. Because Jesus is our friend, because we love him, because we care about him, we should want to abide and bring fruit in. We should want to abide with our friends.

Kids, middle schoolers, high schoolers, college age people, parents, adults, this is good for all of us. You've got a real friend in Jesus. Live like it. Know it. Let it comfort you.

That is great. When there's nobody else there, you've got a friend like nobody else and a friend who laid his life down for you. A friend who gave you all that he had. A friend who sacrificed for you. A friend who left you worried. A friend who wants to listen to you.

You've got a real friend in Jesus. That's encouraging. But as you go out into this world, you need to love what he loves. I want to love people like Jesus loves people. I want to forgive people like Jesus forgives people.

[23 : 28] I want to forgive people like Jesus forgave me. We should love people. Care about them. Love what he loves. You've got a wonderful friend. Let's care about what he cares about. Let's grow closer to our friend Jesus.

The Bible says, draw an eye to God and he'll draw an eye to you. We can have a real friendship and relationship with Jesus.