

Learn to choose your friends wisely.

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Nice to see you all. You just think it's getting warmer, don't you? And then it cools down again. Last Sunday and this Sunday, what a contrast. I'm going to read a few verses from Proverbs chapter 18.

In fact, I'm going to read a little bit ahead of that in chapter 17, a part that Mike read last week, but you'll see the context. Today's sermon is entitled, Learning to Choose Your Friends Wisely. So it's all about friendship. So we're going to look at chapter 17 and verse 17. One of my favorite verses in the Proverbs.

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. What a verse that is. A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor. He who loves a quarrel loves sin. He who builds a high gate invites destruction.

[1 : 15] A man of perverse heart does not prosper. He whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble. To have a fool for a son brings grief. There is no joy for the father of a fool.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice.

A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth. A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.

It is not good to punish an innocent man or to flog officials for their integrity. A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.

Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends. He defies all sound judgment.

[2 : 19] A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions. When wickedness comes, so does contempt, and with shame comes disgrace.

The words of a man's mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook. Amen, and the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word.

The last conservative government raised an international stir when it introduced a minister for loneliness. Imagine that. A minister for loneliness in 2018.

They still have a minister for loneliness with the new government as well. So it's still a thing. Part of culture, I think, and all of that remit. When they did this, it was the first of its kind in the world.

Time magazine hailed it as a welcome initiative, and the first of its kind. The sad reality, it said, of modern life. Countries around the world are increasingly examining loneliness, typically defined as the feeling of lacking or losing companionship, as a public health concern.

[3 : 30] Of course, in our virtual world, we have lots of friends that we've never met before, which is kind of an unusual phenomena. If you were born at a time when there was no such thing as a mobile phone, which is true for a lot of us, to have a virtual friend, well, it didn't exist.

The nearest thing you got to a virtual friend was a friend who would send you a message by pigeon or something. Or you'd get that thing called a letter through the post. Remember letters and stamps. Pen pals. Remember pen pals? Yeah. Nowadays, of course, you've got friends all over the place. The only problem is you don't know if they're real friends or bots.

You can get bot friends now who are trying to kind of find out all information about you. And of course, ironically, with the increase of social media outlets and virtual friends, you have also the increase of loneliness.

Because having a friend on screen is not the same as having a friend sitting next to you that you can chat to and bear your heart with. The Mental Health Foundation in the UK estimates that one in four adults feel lonely some or all of the time.

[4 : 41] Is that you? One in four people. That's a significant number of people, isn't it? Hence the need for a minister for loneliness.

Government research shows that 16 to 24-year-olds are the loneliest age group and are also the least likely to take action to help themselves. Figures show that nearly half of students admit that they have hidden their feelings of loneliness for fear of, guess what?

Being judged. It's kind of an unusual phenomenon that you hear mostly from the youth. They're grateful if you're not judgmental.

If you don't judge them. And I guess that also is the problem of living your life out in public so much. You've got to look right, wear the right things, do the right things, say the right things, be cool. All of that stuff. It's very hard for the youngsters particularly. That's government research, by the way. UK government put out a recent document where they got hold of some celebrities and influencers.

[5 : 50] That's a thing. Are you an influencer? Well, modern influencers join forces to tackle loneliness. It's quite a damning report, really. Now, the Bible declares that there's one thing in creation before the fall.

There was one thing that was not good. Do you know what it was? That's very, very true. It is not good for man to be alone.

And so God created a woman for him. And that woman was celebrated with the words, This is now born of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

That's a kind of true picture of true companionship. Where there is such a uniting of hearts and minds and souls that you can literally say, This person is born of my bone, flesh of my flesh.

They're one with me. We are intertwined and locked together in companionship. Now, that's not just true of husband and wife.

[6 : 54] It can also be true of friends. One of my favorite Old Testament scriptures, I've preached it at weddings many a time, is from Ecclesiastes chapter 4, verses 9 to 12.

Lovely scripture.

Friendship is really important.

We need friends to live well in life, for it is not good for us to be alone. And did you notice chapter 18, verse 1?

An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends. He defies all sound judgment. It's not wise to be on your own. It's not wise to be an unfriendly person, because you never know when you'll need help.

[8 : 20] And if you've spent all of your life studiously avoiding friendships, you'll find yourself awfully lonely when you are no longer able to take care of yourself and you need the support and help of other people.

Next slide, please. You'll all be familiar with the TV show. Well, I say you all will. Some of you won't. But Friends, the TV show, such a phenomena.

Season 1 was watched by 30.2 million viewers, and the finale, which aired on September 22, 1994, of the first series, 52 million.

That's the size of some small countries, isn't it? Some relatively large countries. 52 million people watch Friends. Forbes estimated that Friends in total has grossed \$1.4 billion.

And the six stars, do you know their names? Lisa does. Anybody else? Ross, Rachel, Chandler, Joey, Monica, and Phoebe, have received about \$816 million each in pre-tax earnings.

[9 : 28] They get \$20 million a year still to this day, or in case of one of them, his estate will, because it's still watched by people all over the world, everywhere, because Warner Brothers own the rights, and 2% of it go to the stars.

Now, the question is, why is it so popular? If you've watched it recently, they wouldn't make friends like they do. Six white people, six heterosexual people, six people whose kind of ideal relationship will lead to romance and marriage.

Okay, they do a lot of dodgy things along the way in their friendship, and yet their friendship is enduring. They mess up. We watched one yesterday where Ross tries to get the sofa up the stairs. A very funny one. Pivot, pivot, pivot. He never manages to get it upstairs and chops it in half and takes it back to the store and gets \$4. It's a great one. But he's got friends who'll help him try, even though it's a foolish task.

They fall out with each other, but they make up. They sometimes fall in love with each other and realize it was a mistake, or in the case of Ross and Rachel, they realize that really they were

destined to be together.

[10:49] Why is it so popular? Because it presents a kind of ideal friendship. People you can relate to, people you can aspire to, a kind of friendship that you may want.

One that's loyal, one that's trusting, one that sticks together, no matter what. Even the theme tune says, so no one told you life was going to be this way.

Your job's a joke. You're broke. Your love life's D.O.A. It's like you're always stuck in second gear when it hasn't been your day, your week, your month, or even your year.

But guess what? I'll be there for you. That's what friendship is. I'll be there for you, whether it rains, whether it's winter, whatever it's like.

I'll be there for you. It's a good song. It's a good theme. It's a good idea. A friend, a friend, it says, loves at all times.

[11:49] And a brother is born for adversity. Or this wonderful verse. I'm still looking over there for one that doesn't exist. Perfume and incense brings joy to the heart and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

Think about your friendships. Do they bring joy to your heart? Is the person you're friendly with pleasant smelling? Now, I don't mean, have they had a shower lately?

Or do you like their deodorant? I mean, do they bring a joy, a pleasure, a good aroma into your life? You're grateful for them, thankful for them. Sometimes they might say tough things to you.

Sometimes they might tell the truth and upset you. But even if they do, they then put an arm around you and show their love for you.

Because they don't flatter you with false words. They don't pretend. They're not using you or taking advantage of you or manipulating you. Their interest is your interest.

[12:58] You're their best interest. You're more important to them than even they are to themselves. That's what good friendship is like. I'll be there for you. So Proverbs, next slide, shows us the value of true friendship.

Listen to these verses. Proverbs 18, 24. Proverbs 18, 24. Next slide. A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

I always think of Jesus there. A friend who sticks closer than a brother. One who will never let us down. One who will not abandon us in our time of need. And I'm grateful that I have friends like that and I've had friends like that for many years.

I've discovered the value of true friendship. One who will stick close to you. Even above that of the duty of your family members. And you've found them, haven't you?

If you're a Christian, you've found them in Jesus. You've found friends like that who are always there. No matter what you've done, no matter where you've been, no matter how low you've fallen.

[14:01] Next slide. Proverbs 27, verse 6. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Sometimes my friends have had to say tough things to me.

They've had to say it, sort yourself out, lad. They've had to say, you know you're in the wrong, don't you? They've had to say, I think you're doing, you're just, you know, you need to settle down a little bit.

Calm down. Get refocused. And you don't mind that from friends. That's what friends are there for. They don't try to manipulate or flatter you.

Proverbs 27, verse 9. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. Good friends give you good advice.

The best of friends bring out the best in you. And next, we think about the importance of choosing your friends wisely.

[15:04] That's the theme of our sermon. The importance of choosing your friends wisely. Rick Warren, in a talk entitled Forming Healthy Friendships, next slide, identifies three categories of friends.

What he calls casual friends, close friends, and core friends. Now, we all have these types of friends. Casual friends are the lots of people.

We have lots of people who we know. Yeah. I mean, in church, when there's a hundred or so of us, we'll have lots of people we know we'll say hello to.

We'll greet them with a handshake or a hug or whatever else. But we don't get to know everybody the same, do we? But they're all friends. And then there are close friends.

We have, sorry, we have casual friends in life all over. Work, family, all kinds of things. Neighbours, and so on. Close friends are fewer in number of necessity.

[16:01] You spend more time with them and they have an increased influence on you. And then core friends, he calls them, are those who are inevitably small in number.

You spend lots of time with them and you tell them your trusted secrets. You're invested in those friendships and those people have a huge amount of influence on you.

And because they have a huge amount of influence on you, it's important that you choose them wisely. You wouldn't want such a friend who would betray your confidence, would you? You wouldn't want such a friend whose judgment you couldn't trust or whose life you couldn't respect. There needs to be all of the elements together of trust and loyalty and faithfulness and everything else to be able to have those core friends upon whom you depend and whose life you trust and whom you would trust with your life.

And the important decisions in your life. It's important to choose our friends wisely because so many people will become our friends but not necessarily for the right reasons.

[17:15] Proverbs 19 verse 4 says, Wealth brings many friends but a poor man's friends deserts him. The prodigal son found that out, didn't he? Wealth brings many friends.

Who's buying? Who's getting the next round in? Who's paying for the tickets? Who's buying the meals? If the rich guy does it, he has lots of friends until he's poor and then they desert him.

I, for many years, used to follow boxing very closely. I noticed a phenomenon among all the great heavyweight champions of the world. When they were champions of the world, they had lots of advisors and hangers on and as soon as they were not champions of the world and their money was gone, they had nobody.

Joe Louis ended up being a doorman, greeting people. Once had millions at a day when having millions was wow. But his friends drained him of his money.

Proverbs chapter 19 verse 6 and 7 says, Many curry favor with a ruler and everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts. Everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts.

[18:21] A poor man is shunned by all his relatives. How much more do his friends avoid him? Though he pursues them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found. Wow, I helped them out.

When they were in need, I helped them out and now I'm in need. There's nobody to help me. Because you didn't have real friends. A friend loves at all times. A brother is born for adversity. So Proverbs 12, next slide, and 26 says, A righteous man is cautious in his friendship. A righteous man is cautious in his friendship.

But the wicked lead him astray. So then, what should we be looking for when we choose our friends? Let me give you some advice from Proverbs.

Oh, that's a bit small. First one, avoid making friends with people who love to argue. Proverbs 20, verse 3, It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

[19:29] You know, the kind of person that you go out with who gets into a row because the meal's not right or the drink's not right or the company's not right and before you know it, a big row kicks off.

Maybe it gets physical. The police arrive and you end up in trouble. You know the problem there? It's the people you go out with. Yeah?

People who love to argue divide people. So avoid them. Secondly, people who can't control their temper.

It's kind of related. Proverbs 20, verse 19, Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man. Do not associate with one easily angered or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

Okay, no need to say anymore. If somebody's always losing their temper, avoid them as friends. Thirdly, people who love to gossip for obvious reasons.

[20:30] People who love to gossip will soon gossip about you too. Proverbs 20, verse 19, A gossip betrays a confidence, so avoid a man who talks too much.

Watch for the gossips. And gossip, Rick Warren said quite helpfully, is sharing information when you are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution.

sharing information when you are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution. Learn to tell yourself, some things are just not my business. It's not for me to know.

But avoid making friends with people who love to gossip. Fourthly, people who like to manipulate people with flattery. Proverbs 29, verse 5, whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his

feet.

Now, our trouble normally is, not everybody's trouble, but our trouble normally is that when we look in the mirror, we really do think we're the fairest one of all. So, if we make friends with people who tell us that we are actually even more fair than we think we are, well, that's okay as long as they're prepared to tell us when we're not so fair, either in temperament or behavior or attitudes or whatever it might be the case.

[21 : 51] A true friend tells us the truth. Don't flatter us and deceive us with words. Flatterers are out to get you to do something for them. They may flatter you in order to stoke their own ego.

Everybody who thinks you're great and tells you you're wonderful and you never do anything that's annoying is, well, they've not been around you long enough or they're not prepared to tell you the truth.

Fifthly, people who are willing to engage in illegal and immoral activities and encourage you to do the same. Proverbs 4, 14-17, do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.

Avoid it. Do not travel on it. Turn from it and go on your way for they cannot sleep till they do evil. They are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall.

They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. How many times have you met people or heard of people who just got in with the wrong crowd and they got into the wrong crowd and they got into the wrong behavior and they got into the wrong place at the wrong time and got into trouble?

[23 : 06] The answer to the Proverbs is easy. Avoid people who will willfully engage in illegal and immoral activities. Now there's a caveat here which is very important.

1 Corinthians 5 9-11. Paul is speaking in the context of believers who claim they're believers but they're immoral. And this is what he says.

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. Not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral or the greedy unswindlers or idolaters.

In that case you would have to leave the world. So Paul is not talking about unbelievers. He understands that there are going to be unbelievers who do immoral things and do illegal things and whose behavior and attitudes and actions are not commendable.

But Paul is not saying avoid them. He is saying avoiding making Christians your core friends avoiding making them your friends if they are behaving in immoral or illegal ways.

[24 : 10] Because they are pretending to be something that their behavior is suggesting that they are not. That is Christian. So when we are choosing our friendships we are not to kind of disappear in some holy huddle and never contaminate ourselves with any unbelievers.

We are to make friends with people who are in the world because how else can we win them for Christ? But when we are making friends that we trust our lives to, when we are making Christian friends as Christian believers, believers, they have to have a lifestyle that shows a consistency with the Christ they believe in and profess.

We make Christ-like friends who are seeking to be Christ-like people. And then lastly, avoid making friends with people who are ignorant and unteachable.

Proverbs 14 verse 7, stay away from a foolish man for you will not find knowledge on his lips. If you make a friend with a know-it-all, you'll find that you've got nothing to contribute to their thinking at all.

Because everything you know, they will know. Everything you do, they will have done. And every time you want to celebrate the fact, as my dad used to say, that you've just been able to buy a wheelbarrow, you'll find that they've got a horse and cart.

[25 : 32] Yeah. Just watch out for arrogant people. They usually will not benefit you in any way in friendship. Now, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 33, a verse well worth memorizing, bad company corrupts good character.

Now, some people say he must be caught in the philosophers, who used to say, bad company corrupts good morals. Perhaps he is. Except in 1 Corinthians 15, he's talking about people who stopped believing in the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ, and are trying to explain away the resurrection.

So, Paul is talking about people who are believing the wrong things, and he says, bad company corrupts good character. You have to watch yourself. If you find yourself around somebody who

claims to be a Christian, but denies the fundamentals of the gospel, they will begin to corrupt you. You have to be careful with your thinking. What we think matters. You know, people often say, it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we all love one another. No, no, no, no, no. It does matter what you believe. Paul does speak about love, but he says, guess what? Speak the truth in love. He didn't say, abandon the truth for love. He says, speak the truth in love. [26 : 51] What we believe matters. Bad company corrupts good character, but so does behavior. Behavior matters, because behavior is an expression of what we believe. If I believe something wholeheartedly, I will behave in ways that are consistent with that belief, and therefore the two go together.

Watch your life, Paul says, and doctrine closely. Always keep those two things together. Choose your friends wisely.

Good, godly, believing Christians are to be your core friends, friends, and you can trust your life to them. So then, a little bit of a tip on who you should choose as your friends.

Next slide, please. First of all, those who bring joy. Yeah? There's an old saying that there are some people who could bring tears to a glass eye.

It's a great saying, isn't it? Yeah? It's so miserable to be around. Oh, they drain the very life out of you. But actually, true friends bring joy.

[27 : 57] Proverbs 27, verse 9, perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friends springs from his earnest counsel. If you've got good friends, you love to be with them.

They don't drain you and exhaust you, they bring pleasure into your life. So make sure you're a friend who brings joy, and make sure you have friends that bring joy as well.

Secondly, those who support you emotionally. Proverbs 17, 17, a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Make friends of those who see you in your need, are sensitive to those needs, who watch out for the fact that you're struggling, and when you are struggling, they get alongside you to just pick you up again.

Make friends of those who support you emotionally. They don't ignore what you're feeling. They seek to help you to feel better. A good friend is there to encourage you, to serve you, to help you during your trials.

[29 : 05] I'll be there for you. That's a good friend. Thirdly, a good friend, your core friend, should be those who challenge your thinking. Proverbs 13, verse 20, he who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Your good friend should be able to challenge you without you being offended. They should help you to see things through. They should help you to kind of make wise decisions, and they should warn you against making decisions that seem premature and may end up causing you trouble.

people. And interestingly, therefore, we should never exclude people who think differently to us. You know, they have different perspectives.

In fact, it's really good to have friends who think a little differently, who see things in different ways, who compensate for your weaknesses in thinking sometimes, and help you with that.

Your best friends bring out the best in you. Proverbs 27, verse 17, a lovely verse, as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

[30 : 19] You need somebody who intellectually will challenge you. Proverbs 27, verse 6, wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

And then fourthly, choose friends who encourage you spiritually. Do you remember your motto text for the year? 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 11, therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as indeed you are doing.

That's your motto text for this year. So let me ask you, when did you last encourage somebody in their faith? When did you last ask to build somebody up? You know, the wonderful thing about being a Christian nowadays, I think, when I first started ministry back in the old days in the 1980s, you know, if I had to communicate with people quickly, the best way was the telephone, you know, one with wires that you had to plug in, and it rang and didn't have a mute, you couldn't silence it, and you had to have another box to connect the messenger to it.

Remember those days? It wasn't easy to do friendship quickly. Pastorally, it wasn't easy. If you heard somebody had a need, you had to go around and visit them now, I can WhatsApp.

Wow. And sometimes, I can be sitting at my desk, thinking and praying about people, and somebody comes to mind, oh, a quick message, another quick message, before I know it, within 10 minutes, I've done about three pastoral counseling sessions.

[31 : 52] It's fantastic. And then I think, it's not the same as seeing people face-to-face, but it's good. It's one of the great things about friendship. But all of the time, we should use these vehicles, these means as vehicles for Christian encouragement.

That's what I love about our WhatsApp groups. If you're not on them and your phone can get WhatsApp, because there are still some phones that can't, I'm told, then, you know, getting a message, an encouraging scripture, a song, a hearing that somebody's praying for you and then discovering at the end of the day, it's about 537,000 people that are praying for you. I'm exaggerating, of course, but you know my point. Yeah, it's wonderful. You get to the point where you kind of get exhausted pressing the little button that says, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, etc.

Encouraging one another. What does it mean to encourage one another? Well, it means to give them your heart and to fill their heart with good things.

Give them your heart and fill their heart with good things. love you. The important thing about encouragement is that when you leave your friend, you leave them feeling better than they were, not worse.

[33 : 11] Yeah, not worse. Leave them feeling better. And if their story is full of war and full of sadness and everything else, at least say, I'm so sorry for your pain.

Can I pray for you? I want you to know that I love you and that I'm here for you. always. A friend loves at all times.

Be an encourager. Fill their heart with good things. So, how do we learn to be good friends? Next slide, please. A man of many companions, Proverbs 18, 24 says, a man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

brother. How do you become a good friend? Learn to stick closer than a brother. Yeah? Be committed to your friendship. And first of all, be good to be around.

Be cheerful and learn to greet people with a smile. It's a good thing. It's a good thing. One of the great things about driving around Whitby as I do, or walking around Whitby, is I observe people who seem to be waving at me.

[34 : 26] And I always wave back. And then I think, who was that? Sometimes Lisa will say to me, who was that? I say, I have no idea. Or she might even say, they weren't waving at you, they were waving at them.

I took Josh up to church this morning. It was a man walking his dog. We saw him, didn't he? Waved at us, we thought, except I waved back and then he was waving at the man running across the road behind me. I thought that's okay.

I might have made his day. I don't know. Somebody once said, if you see somebody without a smile, give them one of yours. The problem with modern society is we become increasingly isolated.

We don't know who our neighbors are. We feel funny when we're walking down the street. Just regularly say hello to people. It's a good thing. Be good to be around.

Proverbs 15 30, a cheerful look brings joy to the heart and good news gives health to the borns. Secondly, be a giver and not just a taker.

[35 : 28] Philippians 2 verse 4, each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. You want to be a good friend? Care about the person.

Listen to their story. Be considerate with your time and attention. You can't do friendships quickly and some people just need to talk and so we need to learn to listen.

And therefore, be sure that in your friendships it's not always got to be about you. Do you have friends like that?

It's always got to be about them. And you've got a story to tell them and as soon as you begin to tell them they're not interested, they want to tell you about their problems. But in friendships that the Bible mandates, we should be slow to speak and quick to listen.

Proverbs 20 verse 5, the purposes of man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

[36 : 34] If you've got a friend who's struggling, you're just aware they've not said anything, but you're aware that they're struggling, make time to get alongside them. You don't need to say anything too much at the beginning, just say how are you and then wait and see if they'll tell you.

A good friend will draw it out. A good friend will show sympathy, a good friend will have empathy, a good friend will be compassionate. Thirdly, be authentic.

That means be who you are. How many people try to be something they're not in order to gain friends and then find that the friendships are not good friendships? because they become conditioned on the fake you rather than the real you.

You can only have good true friends if you are who you are with them. You're authentic. Once you try to pretend to be something you're not, you'll end up in trouble in those relationships.

Job says, a despairing man should have the devotion of his friends even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. Quite a statement that. Job was in that position where people were accusing him of fearing, of having forsaken rather, the fear of the Almighty and his friends were ready to give up on him.

[37 : 57] And Job says, I should have had your devotion. That's a challenge to us as Christians, isn't it? I've had Christian friends who've walked away from their faith, but I didn't stop being their friends.

Because the only way you're going to win them back is if you show compassion to them when they're faithless themselves. They don't need your condemnation, they need your friendship.

So therefore, be loyal. A friend loves at all times. Be loyal. And then be trustworthy. Keep the confidence of your friendship.

friendship. Don't let somebody down by telling everybody else about them. Even telling everybody about them because you are worried about them and want to pray.

Sometimes you just have to keep confidence. For if you betray your friend, then you are not a worthy friend. A friend loves at all times.

[39 : 06] And then ultimately be Christ-like. Christ-model friendship in all its perfection. Loyal, committed, trusting, honest, open.

Be Christ-like. Model Jesus in your friendships and you will have good friends that will last.

Friendship, quite a theme and a lot there to think about.

heart. We have a friend who sticks closer than a brother. We want you to find a friend in Jesus.

What a friend we have in Jesus.

All our griefs and sins 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. written by Joseph Scriven, a man from Northern Ireland whose fiancée died in the riverbank.

[40 : 11] The day before their wedding, she drowned. And then he went to the Middle East and he went to Canada, took up the work of the gospel.

He met a lovely young woman. He was about to get married again. She wanted to be baptized to join the fellowship that he was in. She was baptized in the freezing cold river or lake in Canada.

She got pneumonia and she died. And still he wrote, what a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear.

You see, true friendship holds on. True friendship trusts when it doesn't appear obvious that our friend loves us because we understand in Jesus we have a friend who will never let us down and who will never leave us or forsake us.

We have a friend in Jesus and if you find a friend in Jesus, you will also find you have friendships here. But it isn't conditional upon finding Jesus.

[41 : 23] we seek to encourage real friendships of unconditional love and we will say to you no matter where you've been or what you've done or no matter how bad it's been or no matter how shamed you are, you can always find friends here who will not condemn you because they have learned from Jesus that greater love hath no manliness than a man lay down his life for his friends.

And we are your friends. you can come here and find friendship. Amen. Amen.