

Gospel of John Chapter 15C

“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: "What! You too? I thought I was the only one.” — C.S. Lewis

“A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.” — Elbert Hubbard

“What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies.” — Aristotle

“If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you.” — A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

“There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate.” — Linda Grayson

What are the things you look for in a true friend? Love, Acceptance, Faithfulness, shared interests, similarities in personality, open and honest communication?

Who chooses your friends for you? Some of you will say you chose your own friends, Some of you might say that your spouse chooses your friends, some of you will say that God arranges your life in such a way that He orchestrates your friendships.

- This morning we are going to look at Jesus’ friendship with his disciples and consider what it means to be a friend of God.

Boice: *“There is something charming about the word “friend” or “friendship.” It is due partly to our desire for a close friend or friends and partly, too, to our remembrance of them.”*

- Looking at our lives we often mark off different periods by the friends we have had.
 - We think of the friends who went to grade school with us and the things we did with them. (*Building forts, playing stick-ball in the street,)*
 - Going into high school many of us were forced to make new friends. The innocence of childhood was gone. For many of us these were challenging years of rebellion and experimentation, *Friends were very important at this stage of life.*
 - Some of us have had college friends and those we have acquired later in life. These friendships can last for decades.
 - We value friendship and know that we would be much impoverished if it were not for these valuable relationships.

Our personal experience with friendship makes these verses uniquely appealing, in them the Lord Jesus Christ, the great incarnate God of the universe, speaks of our relationship with him in the terms of friendship. He calls his disciples, “friends,” saying,

John 15:12 **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

13 **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.**

14 **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

15 **No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.**

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

OUTLINE: Jesus calls his disciples friends, What does friendship with God look like?

1. Friends of Jesus love one another
2. Friends of Jesus love with a sacrificial love.
3. Friends of Jesus walk in obedience.
4. Friends of Jesus know divine truth.
5. Friends of Jesus are chosen by Jesus

Friends of Jesus love one another:

John 15:12 **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

- Once again we find that Love is the acid test of true discipleship.
- JOHN uniquely calls himself *“The Disciple whom Jesus loved”* In all of his writings, he reminds us again and again that we are to love one another.

John 13:34 **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**

1John 3:11 **For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**

1John 4:11 **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

- OK so we are commanded to love one another, what does that love look like? What are the standards / limitations of that love?

Friends of Jesus love with a sacrificial love:

13 **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.**

- On one level, this axiom lays out the standard of love Jesus’ disciples are to show to one another; At another, it refers to Jesus’ own death on behalf of his friends.
 - There is NO higher standard of love than that which was expressed by the Lord Jesus and this is the standard that He holds out to those who would be his friends:

Ephesians 5:1 **Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

- Example: Bob Morrison giving a portion of his liver / kidney to a friend...
 - Giving up your afternoon to visit a shut in Saint.
 - Making a meal for a new Mommy
 - Praying with a Sister who went through a difficult season of life.

Friends of Jesus walk in obedience:

14 **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

- Obedience is NOT what MAKES them friends; it is the attribute that characterizes Christ’s friends.
- We do not EARN God’s friendship through our obedience rather obedience is the distinguishing characteristic of all His genuine friends.

1 John 5: 2 **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.** 3 **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.**

- If obedience is a necessary criterion for Christ's friends what differentiates them from common servants or slaves?
- Come to think of it Paul calls himself the servant of Jesus Christ in most of his epistles.
- 2 Peter 1:1 **Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ,**
- Col 4:12 **Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ**
- ALL Christians are servants of the Lord; what is it that makes a servant a FRIEND? What makes a servant a friend is the relationship of love and the intimacy of communication.

Friends of Jesus know divine truth,

Any King would rightfully demand obedience from all of his servants. His servants are simply told what to do BUT his friends KNOW his thought process because He shares it with them. These friends have the privilege of full understanding through clear communication.

15 **No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.**

- Jesus uniquely reveals himself and the heart of the Father to those he calls as friends.
- We have different levels of communication that we utilize in different levels of relationship. They are:
 - Cliché – “How you doing? Nice weather. (that guy at the gym)
 - Reporting facts – “did you hear about that plane crash in S.F..” (co worker)
 - Ideas / Judgments – sharing plans, hopes dreams (friend)
 - Complete emotional and personal communication (best friends)
- Jesus communicates the very heart of the Father to those he calls his friends.

CONSIDER THE “MYSTERIES” that were hidden for ages but have now been made clear through the teachings of Christ and his Apostles:

Romans 16:25 **Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages** 26 **but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith**

- Mystery of the Faith: (1 Tim 3:9)
- Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:11)
- Mystery of the Gospel (Ephesians 6:19)
- Mystery of God's Will (Ephesians 1:9)

2 Individuals in the O.T. called friend of God:

Moses – is called a friend of God...

Exodus 33:11 **Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.**

- Moses enjoyed a deeper level of communication with God than the rest of Israel.
- Psalm 103: 7 **He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.**

Abraham

James 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

- Seeing that Abraham was the friend of God, He informed Abraham when he was about to judge the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, saying:

Genesis 18: 17 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

Just as God spoke of his CHOICE concerning his friend Abraham, Jesus speaks concerning his choice of those he calls friends:

Friends of Jesus are chosen by Jesus

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

- Intimate friendship with God must be initiated BY GOD because the natural man being spiritually dead in trespasses and sin has neither the desire for nor the ability to engage in true friendship with God.
- BUT God, for his own glory as a display of his boundless grace chooses men and women to be his friends.
- With God’s sovereign choosing in mind Peter calls the church, “a chosen race.”

1 Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

- When Peter addressed his letter he wrote: 1Peter 1:1, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
 - Elect = CHOSEN
 - Throughout the New Testament the church is spoken of God’s chosen people.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Some people might be tempted to BOST, to walk in PRIDE when they consider that out of all of the people on the face of the earth God CHOSE them.
- This was the sin of many of the people in Israel. Instead of being humbled by God’s Sovereign Grace and holding that same grace out to the world, they became proud.
- Paul didn’t want the Corinthians to fall in pride, he reminded them who they were:

1 Corinthians 1: 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose

what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

- If we are going to be honest we must humbly admit that there is NOTHING in us that warrants God's choice. (Theological point) His election is by GRACE ALONE.
- Like the Apostles WE were not the influential of this world, certainly not the brightest, valedictorian, most handsome. We did not EARN his friendship through our works.
- Actually He chose us before we did anything good or bad:?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- In some mysterious way, before the foundation of the world, before any one of us was brought into existence, before we had done any works good or bad, God sovereignly chose to lavish his grace upon us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Knowing that we have been chosen by God SHOULD HUMBLE US AND DRIVE US TO worship and to bear the fruit of love and obedience.

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,

- Jesus uniquely chose these 11, his closest friends throughout his incarnation and he ORDAINED them as apostles.
- They would carry the glorious Gospel to the ends of the earth.

