

Morning Sermon March 17, 2019
"Christian Friendship" John 15:12-15

Friendship is like love, in a world created by God, we see it enjoyed even by those who do not know God –

Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman lawyer, orator and politician who died about forty years before Jesus Christ was born wrote –
"Friendship improves happiness, and abates misery, by doubling our joys, and dividing our grief" – Marcus Tullius Cicero

"You know a real friend?
Someone you know will look after your cat after you are gone."
– William S. Burroughs, Last Words: The Final Journals

However, Scripture gives perfect teaching about friendship!

For example; Solomon in the Book of Proverbs wrote –

¹⁷ **A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17**

²⁴ **A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend *who sticks* closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24**

⁶ **Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Proverbs 27:6**

¹⁷ **As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend. Proverbs 27:17**

I. *Christian friendship is distinguished by self-sacrificing Love, even a high degree of it –*

¹² **This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. John 15:12-13**

1. *When Christ says, greater love has no man than this ... He was first speaking about what He was about to do, die on the cross for His disciples, for us who believe in Him to save us –*

⁸ **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8**

2. *However, when He dies, while His death is primarily a sacrifice to save us from our sins, His unselfishness, His self-sacrifice is also an example for us –*

2 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:1-8**

- A. *Note Paul preaches against selfish ambition*
- B. *He tells us that in lowliness of mind each of us is to esteem others better than himself*
- C. *We are to concern ourselves with other's interests*
- D. *We are to have the mind of Christ, referring to His humble Himself, take up the cross mind!*
- E. *He, Jesus says - ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

II. *Christian friendship is distinguished by obedience to Christ's commandments –*

¹⁴ **You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. John 15:15**

We cannot be "Christian" friends to each other, without having Christ as a friend / meaning also having God as a friend! We cannot have God as a friend without keeping His commands!

- 1. *How important is command keeping to Christ / God?*
- ¹³ **He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded. Proverbs 13:13**

What do the words "despise" and "fears" mean in this verse?

2. *This is something true not only about Christ but to one degree or another about everyone, even sinners –*

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? Amos 3:3

Consider the modern LGBTQ movement, can you be their friends without agreeing with them?

3. *For Christians “unity” a level of friendship has always been a big deal.*

Honestly this is such a big deal that Christians can be deceived, they sacrifice doctrine, God’s Word, Christ’s commandments for the sake of “unity” However, our doctrine, our keeping Christ’s commandments is the basis for our unity -

“Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard (God’s Laws / Christ’s Commands) to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers met together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become ‘unity’ conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.”

– A.W. Tozer, **The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine**

When we “unify” based on each other, we tend to unify according to our weakness and sin, allowing that Christ would not! When we unify in obedience to Christ’s commands; we are all lifted to a higher standard, constantly!

III. *Christian friendship is distinguished by a Christ-given spiritual and accurate knowledge of His truth / communication from Christ & God’s Spirit –*

¹⁵ **No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. John 15:16**

1. *Note the “no longer” it implies Christ once did call His disciples “servants”*

A. *Being a “servant” of Christ is not a bad thing, the Apostle Paul called Himself such –*

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God. Romans 1:1

In fact, the Word translated “servant” δοῦλος in John 15:6, is the exact same word Paul uses translated “bondservant” in Romans 1:1, it is a word that implies OBEDIENCE to Christ’s commands!

B. *We can honestly say being a “servant” of Christ is a first and necessary step to friendship with Christ, my entire last point was about this!*

2. *Friendship with Christ is not a fruit of our obedience, though our obedience is necessary to it, it does not Earn Christ’s friendship, for two reasons:*

A. *1st, Being a perfect, obedient servant does not automatically equate to friendship, consider what Christ himself says about what our attitude should be –*

¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ” Luke 17:10

B. *2nd, None of us are perfectly sinless servants – 1 John 1:5-10*

3. *Being a friend of Christ, God is by the grace of God –*

A. *Implies God tells us what He is doing, He talks to us, He has given us His Word – 2nd Timothy 3:16-17*

B. *By His Spirit He helps us understand, shares with us Christ’s love – John 15:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Romans 5:5*

... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5

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