

A True Friend John 15:1-13

Introduction:

How would you define a friend? Webster's defines it as "one attached to another by affection or esteem." Affection gives the idea of care. There is a saying that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. A true friend seeks the welfare and benefit of the other (Philippians 2:3-4). Everyone needs a friend, even Jesus did (John 15:15). Jesus Christ came to this earth and established friendships. So, what did Jesus teach us to look for in a friend?

The Focus:

- **Every believer must show himself friendly. How?**
 - **By spending time with others.**
 - **By loving others unconditionally.**
 - **By sacrificing for others.**

A true friend loves to spend time with their friends. Jesus said to His friends in verse 4, "*Abide in me...*" This carries the idea of spending time with someone. Jesus invited the disciples into a close relationship with Him. In verse 5, Jesus provided a picture for them by stating that He was the "*vine*," and they were "*branches*." In essence, Jesus was calling them to be connected to Him for their very source of life. He said that outside of being directly attached to Him, they would not be able to produce fruit in their life, just like any branch that becomes disconnected from its source of life and nourishment. Did you know that Christ desires that kind of a friendship and relationship with you (Revelation 3:20; John 10:10)? A friend is someone who is an active part of your life. Jesus wants to abide in you and you in Him. Being a follower of Christ is not a death sentence, but rather, it is a life-giving relationship with Jesus.

Jesus was truly a man's man. That being said, He wasn't afraid nor did He think it only a woman's domain to say words of kindness and affection. Jesus said that He loved His disciples (vs. 9, 12). Not only did He love them, He loved them unconditionally. When Christ was crucified, these very men forsook Him in His greatest hour of need. Like us, they were human; they failed. Even though they turned their back on Him, He still went to the cross on their behalf. As well, we too were included in that group He chose to willingly die for (Romans 5:8). After His resurrection, Jesus sought to see His disciples reconciled. In the 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus caught up with His disciples and said, "*Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*" (**John 20:21**). He came to them to reconfirm that relationship He had with them. A true friend loves you even when you mess up. A great truth we have been given that is found in the Scriptures is that trusting in Jesus establishes a friendship with Him and a relationship is formed that can never be broken. How awesome is that? How is that for unconditional love?

Jesus restored His relationship with the disciples, but prior to that, Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice – He gave His life up to the death of the cross (John 10:15, 18; 15:13). Christ gave His life voluntarily and freely (1 John 3:16). His life was His to keep or give. His life had never been forfeited by sin. He wasn't dying because of something wrong He did, but rather, He was dying for our sins. Willingly out of love, He took our place (1 Thessalonians 5:10). He died for all of humanity. He loves us all and desires a friendship with all of us.

Response to the Sermon:

From the text, we see that Jesus wants to be a major part of our life (vs. 4-5, 7-8). He wants to have a deep, abiding relationship with us. He wants us to know Him more and more every day. And the moment one chooses to trust in what Jesus did for them on the cross and believe in His glorious and triumphant resurrection, He says that we enter into a relationship with Him (Ephesians 1:13). As well, Paul teaches us that this relationship should now compel us to live our life dedicated to glorifying His greatness, embracing the love that He has imparted to us (2 Corinthians 5:15-16). Jesus gives us the key to fulfilling our part of this relationship in verse 10. How are you doing at following God's Word?

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

True friendships are invaluable. A friend is there to pick you up when you fall (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). They love you at all times and in every situation (Proverbs 17:17a). As well, a true friend loves you so much that they tell you the truth no matter what, even if it will hurt (Proverbs 27:6a).

1. According to Proverbs 18:24a, if one is to have friends, they must show themselves to be what? What are some ways that you can do this daily?
2. What is the contrast seen between James 2:23 and James 4:4? How can one obtain what Abraham and God had? What does that thought mean to you in your life?

Application Questions:

In this passage, Christ is called "*the true vine*" and God the Father is called "*the husbandman*" (vs. 1), Christ also speaks of people as "*branches*" (vs. 5), Those that are in Him, if they are to be fruitful, they must "*abide*" in Christ (vs. 4-5). Spiritual life is to be had by being in Christ, and without that connection, people become "*withered*" and lifeless (vs. 5-6). God desires for us to be very fruitful. How does your life reflect the desires of God and Christ in this analogy?

1. As the husbandman of the vineyard, the Father purges those branches that bear fruit (vs. 1-2). What does it mean when it says, “he purges it”? As well, why does God do this and how does this relate to your life?

2. According to verse 4, how do you remain fruitful? What does this mean? What does that look like lived out in your daily life?

3. As a believer and follower of Christ, what must you always remember regarding your relationship with Jesus Christ (vs. 5)? How can you continue in this understanding?

4. According to verse 8, how is God glorified? As well, when He is glorified, what does this produce out of your walk with Him? What do you become?

5. As a follower of Christ, how do you remain in God’s love (vs. 9-10)?

6. If you continue in the love of Christ and if you abide in Him, what is it that you are promised (vs. 11)?

Prayer:

- Pray for a desire to abide in God’s love by desiring to spend time with Him through reading His Word (vs. 4, 9-10).
- Pray that you would have a heart like Christ to forgive and reconcile others when they have failed or done wrong (Ephesians 4:32).
- Pray in thankfulness to God for Christ’s unconditional love and sacrifice, dying for you so that you could be restored and reconciled into a right relationship with God (Galatians 2:20).

- Pray in thankfulness to God that there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God (Romans 35, 37-39).