

The Friendship of God: The Essence of the Gospel

John 15:9-17

9 *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.*



God is in Friendship with Himself

God, in his essence and character is in relationship, a relational being.

Friendship along with Family, are helpful descriptions of the Church

If and only if they transcend our social and cultural experiences of these terms.

This is because our families and friendships are tainted by sin and imperfect.

Yet God's friendship transcends our understanding of that term.

So God is a friend, unlike any other friend we know.

God is Father, unlike any earthly father we know.

God transcends descriptions of himself.

Having said that, however, friendship is perhaps one of the best terms to describe God's desire for his relationship with us.

I Have Called You My Friends

Beyond the Trinity, God invites humanity to friendship.

God sought to walk and talk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the Day in the Garden

Enoch is said to have walked with God.

Abraham is described in Scripture as a friend of God.

David is described in Scripture as being loved by God.

The Disciples are told in the passage that was read:

I have called you friends.

You and Me, All People

All of us are meant to be friends of God.



The Fall of Friendship

The Fall however corrupted our relationship with God.

Friendship, like all other Christian relationships are distorted by sin.

It also corrupted our relationship with each other.

Adam & Eve covered themselves, ashamed.

They no longer were able to stand naked and unafraid in front of God & each other.

They were full of fear.

The Gospel, which is about the kingdom of God is about a kingdom not built on domination but on friendship and affection.

Your Lord is your saviour, your God and your friend.

The entire Christian life, the spiritual life's goal is not mere obedience, but friendship.

The Two Dynamics of Friendship

Diana asked a very pointed and important question:

"Are people afraid of you" or, I would add, are they drawn to you?

Are you afraid of others or do you move towards them?

Yes boundaries are important and wisdom/discernment are to be exercised.

This comes out of experience and hard won wisdom.

Limits of Love. - Health etc.

There are generally two dynamics of friendship:



The **PUSH** is about fear, deception, anxiety, angst, worry.

The Push erodes trust.

It is full of shoulds, expectations and compulsion.

The fear makes us close ourselves up - to deceive, to withdraw.

We respond by pride or despair. Often filled with anger and lashing out and rejection.

We push back.

These are unhealthy responses.



The **PULL** is about love, grace, truth, understanding, security, affection.

The Pull builds trust.

It is full of invitation, encouragement, forgiveness & confession.

Trust is a major aspect of Love, Faith, Hope, Joy - Aspects of Spirituality & Friendship

The trust makes us honest, to tell the truth about our fears, about ourselves.

This is confession and it is good for the soul.

It is the beginning of friendship.

These dynamics how you see others defined by the history of your experiences

Family, School, Church Community, Friends and God.

This is the measure of who is your friend.

It is also a measure of what kind of friend you are.

Degrees of Trust & Fear

Share about someone you were afraid of in your life - who and why?

Preferably someone not in this room.

Share about someone you trust in your life - who and why?

Now think about the degree of trust or fear you might have in your life re. people.

Now what is your degree of trust or fear towards God?

What is God inviting you towards today in regard to your friendship with Him?

Q&A

Closing Meditation

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