

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The Friends of Christ

Part 2

John 15:15

Having a good friend is a blessing! It is a blessing because you have learned from personal experience that you can count on them.

They will seek to support you when they feel you need to be supported. They will seek to provide for you when they feel you need to be provided for. They will even defend if they feel you need to be defended. Having a good friend is certainly a wonderful thing.

The only problem is that sometimes even the most committed friend may be totally oblivious as to what we truly need or if not totally oblivious then certainly at times totally unable to do anything about it. Good friends are a wonderful blessing, but even in the best scenario they may be limited in terms of how they might be able to support us or to supply for us not, only in terms of time, but certainly in terms of eternity.

But this is not the case if we have Christ as a friend. He has no such limitations. He can supply for us and He can provide for us exactly what we need in any and every situation in time and eternity. Therefore, knowing that we have Jesus as a friend can be extremely comforting.

This brings us to the passage that we are currently considering in **John 15:12-16** where Jesus seeks to comfort His disciples by reassuring them, even in light of His imminent departure, that He is in fact their friend.

So let me read for you **John 15:12-16**. **“This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that one lay 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 slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things 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 remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”** So did Christ in these verses in fact reassure His disciples that He in fact was their friend? Absolutely! What did He say in **John 15:15**? **“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what His master is doing; but I have called you friends.”**

But Jesus did not limit what He said to His disciples to a simple declaration of His friendship. Friendship with Christ is a wonderful privilege and those who are enjoying it will be characterized by five different things outlined for us in **John 15:12-16**.

Last week we covered the first of those five characteristics. And what was that first characteristic? The friends of Jesus will be characterized by their love for one another (John 15:12-13). We saw this, I believe, very clearly in **John 15:12** when Christ said, **“This is my commandment, that you love one another.”**

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And of course as we discovered last week the love that we are to have for one another should be sacrificial in nature. And why is this?

Our love for one another as the friends of Jesus needs to be sacrificial in nature because this is the way that Christ in fact loved us and this is exactly how He has commanded us to love one another. Let me again read for you **John 15:12** but this time I will read the whole verse. Speaking to His friends Jesus said, **“This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you.”** And how had Jesus loved them? He had loved them sacrificially.

So, what is the first characteristic of those who are enjoying a friendship with Christ? They will love one another and they will love one another sacrificially. This morning we are now ready to go on to the second characteristic. So, what is it?

The friends of Jesus will know divine truth (John 15:15). Let me read for you **John 15:15**. **“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”** Christ did not keep His eleven disciples in the dark like a typical master might keep their slaves in the dark. Rather, what did Christ do? Christ made what He was doing known to His disciples.

He had made it known to them that He was the Christ and that His Father had sent Him into this world. He had made it known to them that He was going to shortly die on their behalf and would have to leave them in order to return back to His Father. He had made it known to them that after He returned back to His Father that He would ask His Father to send the Spirit to them.

Christ did not hide the truth from His disciples. He was committed to making those truths known to them. Isn't this exactly what Christ said to His disciples in **John 15:15**? It is! This is exactly what He said.

So let me ask you this question: When exactly can we say that Christ has made something known to us, as Christ would make something known to a friend rather than just to an acquaintance or perhaps an enemy?

We know that Christ has made a truth known to us, as He would make a truth known to a friend, when we are able to embrace and incorporate that truth into our lives by faith.

Why is the manifestation of our faith in embracing and incorporating a particular spiritual truth into our lives the key in helping us to identify whether or not Christ has made something known to us as He would make something known to a friend?

The manifestation of our faith is the key in helping us to identify whether or not Christ has made something known to us as He would a friend because it is our faith that makes us a friend of Christ (Hebrews 11:6).

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Let me read for you **Hebrews 11:6**. “**And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**”

So how can we know whether or not Christ has made something known to us, as He would make something known to a friend? We know that Christ has made a truth known to us, as He would make a truth known to a friend when we are able to embrace and incorporate that truth into our lives by faith.

This is very important for us to understand. Why? This is important for us to understand because there are some professing believers who think that Christ has in fact made His truths known to them as He would make His truth known to a friend simply because they have become familiar with His truths or perhaps can even explain them. But being familiar with Christ's truths or even being able to explain Christ's truths is not enough.

The enemies of Christ knew a great many of Christ's truths and in fact had even understood many of them, but this reality certainly did not mean that Christ had made these truths known to them in the same way, as He would make His truth known to His friends.

Let me ask you this question: Three times in the Gospel of John we have already seen the enemies of Christ seeking to stone Him. Why were they moved to do this? Let us, first of all, make sure we understand why they did not pick up stones to stone Him.

They were not picking up stones to stone Him because He had failed to share with them truth, and neither did they pick up stones to stone Him because they did not understand the truth that He had shared. No! In fact, quite the opposite was true.

They were doing this because they had heard and understood what He had said! And they did not like it. They did not like it because they did not possess the faith that would enable them to embrace and incorporate those truths into their lives. So, what did they do? They took offense and sought to stone Him.

They did this in **John 5:18** when Christ called God His Father. They did this in **John 8:59** when Christ said He existed before Abraham. They did this in **John 10:30** when Christ said that He and His Father were one.

Did Christ share certain truths with His enemies concerning Himself? Absolutely! Did His enemies understand exactly what He meant by what He said in many of those cases? Absolutely! But even though this is true there is no way that we could say that Christ had made His truths known to these enemies in **John 5, 8, and 10** in the same way that He would make His truths known to His friends in the context of **John 15**.

And again what is the difference between the enemies of Christ and the friends of Christ when it comes to the matter of Christ having made His truths known to them as He would His friends? The difference is the presence of faith. Again let me remind you of what I have already shared. We know that Christ has made a truth known to us, as He would make a truth known to a friend, when we are able to embrace and incorporate that truth into our lives by faith.

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So where does this faith come from? If the presence of faith is the necessary element in order for Christ to make a truth known, as one would make a truth known to a friend, then it logically follows then He must be the one who in fact provides us that faith. And this is exactly what the Scriptures teach us.

Let me read for you **John 6:29**. “**Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'**”

We cannot manufacture faith. Faith is the work of God and therefore in a real sense the work of Christ and it will make a difference in our lives (John 6:29). Certainly it will make a difference in terms of how a friend of Christ will respond to truth over and against how an enemy of Christ will respond to truth since Christ will provide His friends the faith to embrace and incorporate His truths and will not provide His enemies that same faith.

Forty-five years ago I went to a sports night at a Baptist Church in Compton and at the end of that sports night they gathered all the young people who had come that night into a meeting room in order to share with them certain basic spiritual truths. And this is what they shared.

They shared with me based on **Romans 3:23** that all men were sinners including me. And guess what happened? Not only did I hear it and understand it but I also believe that Christ provided me the faith to embrace this truth and incorporate it into my life producing in me a sense of unworthiness.

They also shared with me based on **Romans 6:23** that the wages of sin is death. And guess what happened? Not only did I hear it and understand it but I also I believe Christ provided in me the faith to embrace this truth and incorporate it into my life producing in me a sense of hopelessness as I saw myself dangling over the precipice of eternal destruction. But they did not stop there, they continued on.

They then explained who Christ was and what He had accomplished on my behalf when He willingly shed His blood on the cross in order to satisfy the debt that I owed to God because of my sin. And guess what happened? Not only did I hear it and understand it but I believe Christ provided me the faith to embrace this truth and incorporate it into my life producing in me a wonderful sense of thankfulness for all that He had done on my behalf. But that was not the last thing that they told me.

They also told me, based on the Scriptures, that if I, desiring to be set free from my sin and all of its consequences, wanted to take advantage of what Christ had done for me and others at the cross, then I would have to reach out and as an expression of my faith personally embrace Jesus as My Lord and Savior. And guess what happened? Not only did I hear what was said and understood what was said but Christ provided me the faith to embrace this truth and incorporate it into my life producing in me a wonderful sense of well-being, as I for the very first time knew for a fact that I was enjoying peace with God, not based on my so-called works of righteousness but rather based on Christ's finished atoning work on the cross.

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Now that was a great night! And why was it such a great night? It was a great night because Christ had made His truths known to me as He would a friend, and in making those truths known to me, as He would make His truths known to a friend I was forever changed. I had become a new creation in Christ; old things passed away, new things had come.

Christ's friends will know divine truth in a way that Christ's enemies cannot know divine truth because Christ will provide His friends the faith to embrace and incorporate His truths into their lives.

Are you a friend of Christ? If you are a friend of Christ He will make His truths known to you in a way that He has not made His truths known to His enemies. He will make His truths known to you in a way that He has not made His truths known to His enemies because He will supply to you the faith that is absolutely necessary if His truths are going to be embraced and incorporated within our lives. And of course it is embracing and the incorporation of Christ's truths into our lives that causes us to pass from death to life and to become a new creation in Christ and subsequently allows us to be transformed us from glory to glory as He very systematically and methodically makes more and more of His truths as His friends known to us.

Have you responded to Christ's truths as a friend would respond to Christ's truths? In other words, has He provided you the faith to believe and make it possible for His truths to continually come alive to you?

May God give us the grace to demonstrate by the way we respond to divine truth that we are in fact the friends of Christ.