



Calvary of Albuquerque

What a Friend We Have in Jesus - John 15:12-17

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

We can get through almost anything in life with friends to share our sorrow and divide our grief. A Chinese word for friend is peng-yu and it has a much fuller meaning than in English. It means "one who brings completion and sums up beauty." The ancient Hebrews saw true friendship as an ideal to pursue and a blessing to enjoy. In these final moments with His followers, Jesus uses a most tender term for their relationship—they were friends! What does that friendship look like?

OUTLINE

- I. Jesus Picks His Friends (v. 16)
- II. Jesus Helps His Friends
 - A. By Sacrificing for Them (v. 13)
 - B. By Speaking to Them (v. 15)
- III. Jesus Anticipates His Friends (vv. 12, 14, 17)



Friendly Questions:

1. What is the greatest sacrifice that any friend made for you? What is the greatest sacrifice you've made for a friend? What were the results?
2. What criteria do you use in choosing friends? How do friendships build you up?
3. Friends are people you can count on; they respond when you ask them to. So how good of a friend have you been to Jesus?

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*
 1. Poem by Joseph Scriven in 1855
 2. Background
 - a. Fiancée drowned the day before their wedding
 - b. Second fiancée, Eliza Roche, also passed away
 - c. Never married
 - d. Written to comfort his ill mother
 3. "Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer."
 - B. What is a friend?
 1. Dictionary
 - a. Someone attached to someone else by esteem or affection
 - b. Someone who is not hostile
 2. British newspaper contest
 - a. Multiplies joy, divides sorrow
 - b. Understands our silence
 - c. A volume of sympathy wrapped in a cloth
 - d. A watch that ever beats and never runs out
 - e. Winner: Someone who comes in when the rest of the world goes out
 3. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17)

4. We have many acquaintances and few friends
5. Survey: What do you want in a friend?
 - a. Able to keep a confidence
 - b. Loyal
 - c. Warm and affectionate

C. Context

1. After the Last Supper
2. Jesus walking with the 11 disciples toward the Garden of Gethsemane
3. Judas is no longer with them; betrayal

II. Jesus Picks His Friends (v. 16)

A. Speaks of His Position

1. Like a famous or wealthy person; His prerogative
 - a. Only a friend when invited in
 - b. "We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

B. Speaks of His Election

1. Predestination
 - a. God, in advance, chooses those to be saved
 - b. "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world," (Ephesians 1:4)
2. Altar calls: we must cooperate by choosing Him

C. Speaks of His Affection

1. Knew all about you, yet still chose you
 2. "I'm so glad that God chose me before the foundation of the world, because he never would have chosen me after I was born!"—C. H. Spurgeon
 3. The love of God is so amazing, that knowing all, He picked me anyway
 - a. Knew Peter would deny Him
 - b. Knew Thomas would doubt
 - c. Knew James and John had violence in them
 4. Michelangelo sculpted "David" from a flawed piece of marble
- D. Speaks of His Intention
1. He has a purpose for life now
 2. Appointed
 - a. τίθημι; tithémi - ordain for a very special purpose
 - b. Service
 - c. Go!
 - i. Motion implied
 - ii. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)
 3. Jesus picks friends, calls them out of the world, saves them, and sends them back into the world to do something about the world they were chosen out of.
 4. Fruit - converts from the unbelieving world
 - a. Spiritual Harvest
 - b. "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.'" (John 4:34-36)
 - c. Christian life is a purposeful life
 - d. "'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'" (Revelation 14:13)

III. Jesus Helps His Friends

A. By Sacrificing for Them (v. 13)

1. The cross: greatest example of love
 - a. Universal principle
 - b. Jesus speaking of His own death: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us." (1 John 3:16)
2. Jesus doesn't just choose you to be a friend; He made it possible by His death on the cross
 - a. All His friends are sinners
 - b. All sinners need to be forgiven
 - c. Forgiveness comes by His shed blood --"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

B. By Speaking to Them (v. 15)

1. He lets us in on the plan of God
2. Servants, Bond slaves
 - a. Paul, James, Peter, Jude
 - b. To be His slave is to be a king
3. Jesus calls us friends
 - a. Friends of the king, in ancient times were close associates of the king
 - b. We don't just blindly follow His orders, He explains
 - i. "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'" (Matthew 13:10-11)
 - ii. "'All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and

have not heard it." (Luke 10:22-24)

iii. What He has revealed

- a. How to get to heaven
- b. What heaven is like
- c. How to have joy and peace
- d. That the Holy Spirit would come
- e. The end of the age
- f. "The whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)
- g. "Mysteries of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10)

iv. Not all understand: "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

- a. We know what no one else knows
- b. We have the secret of the universe

IV. Jesus Anticipates His Friends (vv. 12, 14, 17) (He expects something from them)

A. His friends actively obey Him

- 1. What you do for him
- 2. Not all about negatives

B. His friends repeatedly obey him

- 1. "Do" in the present subjunctive text: continually, habitually, as a lifestyle
- 2. Not do once and quit, or just when others are looking

C. His friends unconditionally obey

- 1. Anything He tells you to do
- 2. "Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

Greek terms: Τίθημι; tithémi - ordain for a very special purpose

Figures Referenced: Joseph Scriven; Eliza Roche; Mariah Carey; C. H. Spurgeon

Publications Referenced: *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, by Joseph Scriven

Cross References: Proverbs 17:17; Matthew 13:10-11; Mark 16:15; Luke 8:10; Luke 10:22-24; John 4:34-36; Acts 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:4; James 4:4; Hebrews 9:22; 1 John 3:16; 1 John 4:19; Revelation 14:13