

“Friendship with Jesus” John15:13-17

I. The Greatest friendship we will ever know is the friendship described and initiated by Christ –

1. It is a friendship / love that grows out of the eternal LOVE of the Godhead –

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (John15:9)

2. It is a love we are called to imitate – John 15:10

¹⁰"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:10 NKJ)

A. The Father loves the Son and the Son returns / ‘abides in’ that love by keeping His commandments

B. Jesus LOVES us and expects us to abide in His LOVE by keeping His commandments ---

3. One of Christ’s goals in this is our “joy” –

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11 NKJ)

4. One of Christ’s priorities for us is that we would “love” each other, even with this GREATEST LOVE –

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12 NKJ)

5. Christ here speaks of and soon will display this GREATEST LOVE –

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:13 NKJ)

A. True love and friendship involves self-sacrifice for the benefit of others – to “lay down one’s life” is the greatest sacrifice, worthy of our praises and thanksgiving –

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (Rev 5:9 NKJ)

B. As Christ did, so His disciples (even us) are called to do –

... 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 NKJ)

6. This love begins in the counsels of God –

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJ)

7. It has its great display in Christ’s death on the cross –

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJ)

8. Yet it is to spread through this world, through us –

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12 NKJ)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35 NKJ)

II. This Love involves us in and requires of us friendship and obedience to Jesus Christ –

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:14 NKJ)

1. Our modern world loves the “friendship” part of this but “hates” the OBEDIENCE part –

A. I have had it said to me “obedience is for dogs” --- yet isn’t a dog often called “man’s best friend”?

B. Obedience to God and Christ is what the world hates MOST – Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." (Psalm 2:1-3 NKJ)

C. *Because of this, I think we often think friendship militates against "obedience" it implies equality and cannot be had between a leader and a subordinate, much less between a Superior and an inferior –*

2. *We are called to COMPLETE OBEDIENCE to Christ because He is our SUPERIOR, yet this does not militate against friendship, Christ tells us our obedience ESTABLISHES the friendship -*

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:14 NKJ)

*Illustrations: (1) the best friend of a major league baseball player
(2) the best friend of an extremely successful businessman*

How much more is this the case if we are "best friends" with the Lord and Creator of the Universe?

III. This friendship involves us in Christ's (and the Father's) plans, mission, work, etc...

"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. 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 the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ "These things I command you, that you love one another. (John 15:15-17 NKJ)

1. *Friendship means truthful, open communication –*

"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.

A. *One of the most hurtful things in the world is when you find out someone who professed to be your best friend, had ulterior motives, secret plans, maybe even for your hurt –*

B. *A true friend tells you about his or her plans, that is what Jesus does with us –*

2. *A friend is a person who chooses us, desires us, to be part of his or her life and goals --- Jesus is this kind of friend and MORE –*

"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 the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16 NKJ)

A. *Jesus choose us –*

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you"

¹⁹ **We love Him because He first loved us. (1Jo 4:19 NKJ)**

• *His choice was not because we were better than everyone else -*
²⁶ **For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;
²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1Co 1:26-29 NKJ)**

• *Yet, His choice is meant to make us better –*

Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:12-14 NKJ)

B. *Jesus appointed us (to bear fruit)*

and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain *The fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23 / John 15:1-8*

• *The fruit of saved souls – Romans 1:13*

• *Lasting fruit – "... and that your fruit should remain" – Revelation 22:2*

3. *He also expects our communication and promises His father's provision – "that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."*

IV. Lastly, this friendship with Christ puts an emphasis on our true LOVE to each other –

"These things I command you, that you love one another. (John 15:17 NKJ)