

Lighthouse Bible Church

June 15th, 2014 *Scripture Reading; Romans 5: 6 - 11*

John 15: 12 – 17 *'Being a Friend of Jesus'*

Stand – Read – Pray

Last week we saw that because of what had happened in the upper room with Judas betraying Jesus, after being with Him for 3 years, and the other 11 disciples faithfully following Him, Jesus starts Chapter 15 with an analogy or a metaphor.

It was the metaphor of a vine, a vine dresser and the branches of the vine. Jesus then likened Himself as the 'true vine' and God the Father as the 'vinedresser' and believers and unbelievers as branches of the vine.

The believers were the branches that were producing fruit and being pruned by the vinedresser to produce more fruit and the unbelievers were the branches that were withering and producing no fruit, that eventually were thrown into the fire and burned. It was really a metaphor that contrasted true believers with false converts but that both were identified with Christ. Much like the passage in Matthew 7 and other places and much like the life of the religious leaders of Jesus day.

The key to that passage was that true believers abide in Christ, they remain and continue and endure with Christ because He abides in them. The call to all born again believers is to abide in Christ, abide in His love and that His word abides in us so that we can have His full and complete joy abiding in us. And that is where we left off last time so we want to pick it up in verse 12.

This passage is about the friendship between Jesus and His beloved disciples who are the fruitful branches, who are the ones abiding in Him and His word and His love and by extension this is about the love and friendship between Jesus and us here today who are born again believers.

And if you think about that; it is incredible to know that the creator of the universe, who upholds all things by His power, is a close intimate friend to His children that have been born again. This passage shows us what it means to be a friend of Jesus.

Jesus said in Verse 13 that He would lay down His life for His friends. He says in verse 14 'you are My friends', He says in Verse 15 'I have called you My friends'. This is a passage about the friendship between Jesus and His disciples and between Jesus and us today. *They needed to hear this and so do we today.*

Because when it comes to friendship, we have two choices; either being friends of Christ or being a friend of the world. James said in **James 4: 4** that **friendship with the world is being an enemy of, being hostile toward God.**

Believers are called a lot of things in scripture in our relationship to Jesus. We are sheep, disciples, children, brothers, sisters, sons; and they all point to the intimate love relationship we have with Jesus; and now we are called friends as well. So let's look at these verses to see our friendship relationship with Jesus and the evidence that we are friends with Him and He is friends with us.

Verse 12: this is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

First of all we are friends with Jesus and He with us when we obey His command to **love one another**. Friends of Jesus love each other, don't they? Jesus said back in **John 13: 34** **a new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you, love one another**. So this isn't a new command, because they already heard it two chapters ago; now they need to **obey** it and **live** it.

The true believer and friend of Jesus loves other believers with that sacrificial, deep, intimate, real kind of love that **I have loved you with**, Jesus says. You can't be a true believer and friend of Jesus if you don't love other believers, other brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let me just remind you what it says in **1st John 2: 9 – 11** says **He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and ... the darkness has blinded his eyes.**

1st John 3: 15 **whoever hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

1st Thessalonians 4: 9 says **but concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.** Who teaches us to love each other? God does! And for us to not do that is a direct rebellion and disobedience against God. Friendship with Jesus shows itself in love to others because that is our nature in Christ.

If you have a problem loving someone, especially and brother or sister in Christ, the way Christ loved you, then maybe you need to be closer friends with Jesus so that the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, will be produced in you.

We are to love **as He loved us** in a sacrificial, self-giving, putting others before Himself, burden bearing, comforting, spiritually instructing kind of love for one another. And remember what Jesus said in **John 13: 35** **by this all will know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another.** That is how we are to show a lost and dying world who we are and who Christ is. And the greatest act of love is seen in Verse 13.

Verse 13: greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Jesus loved His disciples so much that He is willing to give the ultimate sacrifice of love for them; and for us, because if He didn't we would all end up in hell because there would be no sacrifice for sin. *Like John 3: 16*

Jesus knows that He is about to die soon, but He is not dying for Himself, He is dying for us. **1st Peter 2: 24** says **He Himself bore OUR sins in His own body on the tree. Isaiah 53: 5** says **He was wounded for OUR transgressions, bruised for OUR iniquities, the chastisement for OUR peace was upon Him and by His stripes WE are healed. 2nd Corinthians 5: 21** says that **He who knew no sin became sin for us.** You see, we are the beneficiaries of His love because of His sacrificial death for us. We are then called, as verse 12 said, to love others in the same self-sacrificial way, even if it means giving our life for them.

The problem with some people is that they are not even willing to give their time to someone, let alone their lives for them. Some are not willing to help a needy family, help a struggling missionary, help a struggling Christian, let alone give their life for them. If we don't know how to live for others, we certainly won't be able to die for them.

Think about this; Jesus died for us even when we hated Him, right. In **Romans 5: 7 – 8** it says **for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would dare to die, but God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us.** While we were yet God hating, indifferent, selfish, self-centered, blasphemous, Christ rejecting and much more...sinners, Christ died for us.

Now listen to what **1st John 3: 16** says **by this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.**

That is how you know that God and Christ loves you, because He laid down His life for you. Now listen to the rest of the verse ... **and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** Do we really care about each other in a selfless sacrificial way that we are willing to give all for our brother or sister in Christ.

What are the needs that you see out there that you can meet. Whether it is time spent with someone in prayer or helping meet some kind of need, whether it is financially helping someone who has a need, whether it is helping that person to grow in their faith because you see their immaturity come out in different ways, whether it is helping someone to come to the place where they are willing to forgive someone else, or whether it is coming along side someone and helping them financially and personally giving of your time...or whatever.

You see people often talk about love but do they actually show that kind of love for one another? That verse goes on to say in **1st John 3: 17 - 18** **but whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need and shuts us his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? Let us not love in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth.** Then Jesus says in Verse 14

Verse 14: You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

The key to being in a friendship relationship with Jesus is OBEDIENCE, doing whatever Jesus and His words calls us to do or tells us not to do. That becomes the standard of being a friend of Jesus; not legalism but out of love to please Him.

This is back to the branch abiding in the vine. The believer abiding in Christ as **Verse 10** said **if you keep My commandment you will abide in My love.** In **1st John 3: 10** it says **whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.**

In **Mark 3: 31 – 35** Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him and He was with a huge crowd of people... **here are My mother and brothers, for whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.** There is always the intimacy with Christ, like a branch to a vine, like mothers and brothers in families, like sheep to the shepherd who hear His voice, like a disciple who follows His master, and it is all based on obedience to Christ and doing His will.

You don't become intimate friends with Jesus through your obedience, you are His intimate friend and it shows itself through your obedience, out of love, for Him. **John 14: 15** if you love Me you will (what) keep My commandments. Then He says in Verse 15.

Verse 15: 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.

That word **servants** is the word *doulos* and it literally means slave. He says 'I no longer consider you as a master considers his slave, I consider you a **friend**. There is nothing wrong with being a servant or a slave, scriptures calls us, literally, slaves of Christ and servants of God. But here, Jesus uses an intimate term of friendship to identify us with Himself.

And why are we **called His friends, for a servant doesn't know what his master is doing, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.** You see, a slave knew nothing of what his master was doing or why. He just told him to do something and he did it. He didn't tell him about his plan or purpose or desire or anything intimate. He just said this is what I want you to do so do it.

You see, to be a friend of Jesus means you have known and **heard** everything that **My Father made know to Me**, Jesus said. We are not like slaves who are blindly obeying the voice of our Master, we are doing the will of the Father from the heart, because it has been revealed to us. *Read **John 17: 6 – 8***

Jesus told His disciples in **Luke 10: 23 – 24** **blessed are the eyes which see the things you see ... and to hear what you hear.** And only those intimate friends of Jesus can know the truth from God and about God and Christ. And for us today, how have all things that Christ heard been revealed to us? Through His word. We are friends of Christ because everything written about Him and the Father have been made known to us through His Word.

And by the way, only those friends of Christ can understand, can have made knows His word, right? **1st Corinthians 2: 14**: says **the natural man can not understand the things of God because they are spiritually discerned.** Through the indwelling Holy Spirit and by the Word of God, we know things that no one else knows because we are intimate friends with Jesus. Then He says in Verse 16.

Verse 16: you did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you...

That is a power statement. We didn't choose Jesus to be friends with or to even know, but He chose us. This is His divine election of His own for salvation. That is what He is going to say in Verse 19 'I chose you out of the world...' This is an important doctrine that we looked at back in **John 6: 37, 44 & 65**, God sovereignly choosing whom He wills for salvation. Remember in **Ephesians 1: 4 – 5** where it says **just as He CHOSE us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having PREDESTINED us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.** *Acts 13: 48, Romans 8: 29, 1st Thessalonians 1: 3 – 4, 2nd Thessalonians 2: 13, 2nd Timothy 2: 10 talk about same truth.*

Then after choosing us for salvation, it says He **appointed** us, to serve, to bear fruit. That word *appointed* is used of Elders who are to Shepherd the flock of God ‘appointed’ to them in **Acts 20: 28**. It is used of the apostle Paul being ‘appointed’ to ministry and to preach in **1st Timothy 1: 12, 2: 7**, it is the same word used of all people in the church ‘appointed’ to use their spiritual gifts in **1st Corinthians 12: 18**.

So what are we all ‘appointed’ by Jesus, as His friends, to do? The next part of Verse 16 says **that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain**. Listen, Jesus saved us and appointed us to **go** and to **bear fruit**. What Christ has commanded us to do we cannot not do. That is why every true born again believer will be a fruit bearer of some kind, because it was already appointed by Christ that we would.

Every born again believer is a fruit bearer; no Christian is ever chosen to just stand around and watch everything and do nothing. You **help**, you **share**, you **give**, you **proclaim** the gospel, you **love**, you **exhort**, you **rebuke**, you **sing**, you **worship**, you do all that the word calls you to do as a born again fruit bearer commissioned by Christ.

Jesus also said in Verse 16 **that your fruit should remain**. In other words, what you do in bearing fruit in your Christian life will have a lasting impact on those around you. You say ‘well, I’ve never lead anyone to Christ or shared my faith’. Well get out there and do it. But it is also more than that, as we have seen with what true fruit is. It is sharing the gospel, it is living in the fruits of the spirit and showing and sharing love and giving and serving and teaching and all of those things that have an impact that you may never know this side of heaven.

Listen, I don’t know if you have ever considered this or not, but your life has eternal consequences in the lives of others, do you realize that? You affect others for all eternity because that is what remaining fruit does.

You want it said of you what was said in **Revelation 14: 13** where it says **blest are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from the labors and then listen, and their works follow them.**

By the way, as we saw in Verse 7 of Chapter 15 and now see again here at the end of Verse 16, any friend of Jesus experiences answered prayer. It says **that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.**

Again, as we have seen before, to ask something **in Jesus name** simply means to ask for what Jesus would ask for because it is always according to the will of the Father. And when we ask like that **the Father will give you** He says.

So to be a friend of Jesus we must: (1) love one another (2) we must know His revealed truth (3) we must know that we were called and chosen by Him (4) we must bear fruit in our lives that impacts all eternity and (5) we know that our prayers are answered in His name.

What about those people who are not friends with Jesus? Jesus said in **Matthew 12: 30** **He who is not for Me is (what) against Me.** He said in **John 14: 24** **he who does not love Me does not keep My words.** In **John 5: 22** He said **he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father.** You are either a friend of Jesus or you are His enemy because you are a friend of the world.

What about you today?

Lighthouse Bible Church
June 15th, 2014
John 15: 12 – 17
‘Being a Friend of Jesus’

Introduction and Review:

James 4: 4

Verses 12, 17:

John 13: 34, 1st John 2: 9 – 11, 1st John 3: 15

1st Thessalonians 4: 9, John 13: 35

Verse 13:

1st Peter 2: 24, Isaiah 53: 5, 2nd Corinthians 5: 21

Romans 5: 7 – 8, 1st John 3: 16 – 18

Verse 14:

1st John 3: 10, Mark 3: 31 – 35, John 14: 15

Verse 15:

John 17: 6 – 8, Luke 10: 23 – 24

1st Corinthians 2: 14

Verse 16:

John 6: 37, 44, 65, Ephesians 1: 4 – 5, *Acts 13:48*

Romans 8: 29, 1st Thessalonians 1: 3 – 4

2nd Thessalonians 2: 13, 2nd Timothy 2: 10

Acts 20: 28, 1st Timothy 1: 12, 2: 7

1st Corinthians 12: 18, Revelation 14: 13

Matthew 12: 30, John 14: 24, John 5: 22

Lighthouse Bible Church
June 15th, 2014
John 15: 12 – 17
‘Being a Friend of Jesus’

Introduction and Review:

James 4: 4

Verses 12, 17:

John 13: 34, 1st John 2: 9 – 11, 1st John 3: 15

1st Thessalonians 4: 9, John 13: 35

Verse 13:

1st Peter 2: 24, Isaiah 53: 5, 2nd Corinthians 5: 21

Romans 5: 7 – 8, 1st John 3: 16 – 18

Verse 14:

1st John 3: 10, Mark 3: 31 – 35, John 14: 15

Verse 15:

John 17: 6 – 8, Luke 10: 23 – 24

1st Corinthians 2: 14

Verse 16:

John 6: 37, 44, 65, Ephesians 1: 4 – 5, *Acts 13:48*

Romans 8: 29, 1st Thessalonians 1: 3 – 4

2nd Thessalonians 2: 13, 2nd Timothy 2: 10

Acts 20: 28, 1st Timothy 1: 12, 2: 7

1st Corinthians 12: 18, Revelation 14: 13

Matthew 12: 30, John 14: 24, John 5: 22