

Jesus, The One Who Calls Us Friend

John 15:12-17

We have been in the Gospel of John since January, discovering example after example of “*where the love of Jesus is transforming lives!*”

We’ve seen it through Jesus creating life... shining light into the darkness... being the sacrificial lamb... being a miracle worker... the truth teller... our thirst quencher... the bread of life... our Good Shepherd... our feet washer... the Spirit giver... our fruit producer... & the very way to the Father... etc.

I don’t want us to lose sight of the big picture of all that Jesus has done for us, & all that Jesus is for us! Transformation comes into our lives only through Him. And He is the one that we can truly build our lives upon with certainty!

Our text today begins with a familiar theme & command, **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” - vs. 12**

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love as we have been loved by Him! The standard for keeping this commandment is the love He has shown to us!

When I hear that, my mind always goes to the Apostle Paul’s words in **Romans 5:8 – “But God shows his love for us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** Jesus loved us despite us being His enemy!

What’s surprising is that in our Scripture passage today, Jesus doesn’t word it like that! He doesn’t command us to love, because He loved us as sinners, He commands us to love because He loved us as friends!

Vs. 13 - “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus is referring to Himself & His love for His disciples!

Besides Abraham, no human being(s) have been referred to as “friends of God” in all of Scripture! This is a significant teaching/revelation from Jesus!

To be referred to as servants, slaves, disciples, children... these all make sense b/c of who Jesus is as God in the flesh, as Creator, as Lord, & as King!

But to be called friend seems to blur the lines of that which separates us!

Consider the first two songs we sang. They speak of Jesus as “so far above us”, as “Holy” (other than us), and rightfully so because He is!

However, Jesus who could rightfully continue to relate to us from a distance,

and with these distinctions in place, rather He chooses to call us friends!

He chose them/us to be more than just His students, His servants/slaves, His instruments. He chose them as friends, & He shared everything with them!

If anyone could use the “Because I said so” response, it would have been Jesus! He didn’t owe an explanation to anyone, and yet this is what He said:

Vs. 15 – “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant doesn’t know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

This blew my mind, as a person who grew up with clear distinctions between those in authority & those under authority!

Those distinctions can be helpful, but friendship is usually not the outcome!

- Two examples (being a Youth Pastor & being a parent) w/ the pros & cons

Jesus found a way to successfully be both our authority and our friend!

- **Vs. 14 - “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”**

- **Vs. 15 - “All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”**

I have not mastered the balance between these two, but I believe that my relationships are better with the people I lead when I live within the tension.

I was once told by a pastor friend that he made the decision to keep his friends & his congregation separate b/c it’s just too hard when those lines get blurred. I understand why he made that decision now more than ever!

However, the one I’m following modeled something very different! There is no one with more authority, who deserves more of our reverence & obedience than Jesus, & yet Jesus chose to call us, & relate to us, as friends!

When you think of who Jesus is in your life, my hope is that you will see Him as both your Lord, & your friend, for that is how He wants to be known!

Jesus commands us to love, and what He says goes because He has that authority, but He chooses to model that love in relationship with us!

I may never say that Jesus is my homeboy, b/c I think it tips the scale too far in one direction, but I do want to see Him more in ways that He often gets depicted in “The Chosen” series as He interacts with His friends! Don’t you?

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