

# “He calls me FRIEND.”

- Focus Text: John 15:12-17
- Accompanying Text: John 10:17-18, Matthew 11:19, Luke 6:40, 1 John 4:7-12, 1 John 4:18-19

## **John 15:12-17 ESV**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not 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. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Context: Jesus is talking to us about abiding in Him. Jesus is telling us to abide in His love and to keep His commands so that His love may abide in us as we abide in His love. This is an image of intimate union with God, a real person. Before we pick up in John 15:12-17, we are told in John 15:16, that Jesus is speaking these things to His disciples that their joy be made full.

We are given a few things to think about in this section of scripture. Jesus clarifies His commandment to us, to love each other as He has loved us. We are then told what this love looks like in laying one's life down for one's friends. We are no longer being called servants but friends – Our friendship with God is shown in our doing what He has commanded of us, that being to love one another as He has loved us. Jesus chose us and we didn't choose Him, He chose us while we were still enemies and slaves. By loving us as His friends, His command is that same love would abide in us and shine out into this world, continuing to extend that love of Christ. We have been appointed to bear fruit, and fruit that should remain. We are assured that whatever we ask the Father in the name of Jesus, that He may give it to us.

Jesus' command to us is simple but calls for supernatural empowerment to carry out. Have you ever tried to love someone they way Jesus loves us only to see that we cannot try hard enough to love that kind of love. A faith in Jesus - being born again and filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit allows God Himself to empower us with His love to come through us. Some questions to think about.

- How is a friend different from a servant?
- If Jesus treats us as friends, how should we treat others?
- What state were we in when Jesus chose us?
- What state do others need to be in before we should love them? (trick question)
- What does it mean for fruit to abide? What is this fruit?

## **John 15:12 ESV**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

- How did Jesus show His love for us?
- Is Jesus' command to keep the 10 commandments or the 613 commandments from the Old Testament?

### **John 15:13 ESV**

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

### **John 10:17-18 ESV**

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Jesus didn't begrudgingly give His life. We are told by Jesus Himself that no one takes His life from Him but He lays it down of His own accord. He lays down His life with an assurance of resurrection, and as His friends we share this same blessed assurance.

### **John 15:14 ESV**

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Jesus loved us as friends before we were His friends. Jesus loved Judas as a friend though He betrayed Him. We are told that we truly embody what it means to be a friend of God if we do as He has commanded us, being to love one another as He has loved us. This love chooses to serve others, not out of duty or obligation, but from genuine love. Jesus laid down His life out of love and obedience to the Father. Jesus knows who He is as an eternal Spirit man, though they may kill the body, they may never kill the very love that unifies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God IS love (1 John 4:16), and God IS Spirit (John 4:24) and these are eternal.

- How can I willingly love if I am commanded to love? Is this a conditional love? Does God only love us when we do what He says?

### **John 15:15 ESV**

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not 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.

Jesus loves us as friends BEFORE we reciprocate. We are urged to abide and emulate that love to be His friend as well. Isn't it beautiful that God first loved us? How do we carry forth this love? Do we love others as friends BEFORE they reciprocate?

**TRUE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE IS MORE THAN A FEELING, IT IS A DECISION TO HONOR ANOTHER, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, IN BEAUTY OR TRAGEDY.**

### **Matthew 11:19 ESV**

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

Being a friend to us while we were yet sinners meant that Jesus loves us as we are. He came to us, took on scorn and ridicule and would ultimately give His life, to meet us on our level. Jesus didn't demand that we make ourselves holy before He was willing to spend time with us or love us. Jesus came and loved us with a love that would transform us. Jesus came and gave His life so that we would receive His holiness as a GIFT.

- Now that we've received such a gift, how do we respond?

#### **Luke 6:40 ESV**

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

As born-again believers, we are to become like Jesus, as He is the firstborn among many brethren. We are born of His Word. His Word is good seed, and good seed WILL bare good fruit. We don't have to try to be like Jesus, because His likeness is afforded by **GRACE through FAITH as a GIFT** so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9) - by believing Jesus is the Son of God and receiving the truth of the Gospel, that He lived, died, and was resurrected to forgive the sin of the world and invite us into eternal life - We have been seeded with good seed and hope, that God Himself is faithful to bring to maturity. To abide in this truth is to believe with childlike faith that Jesus is who He says He is, and He will do everything He said He would do. As His friend, He lives His life through us, and His love is shown through us as His Kingdom comes on Earth as it is in Heaven.

#### **John 15:16 ESV**

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Our fruit and abiding are not because we chose God but because He chose us. This should be a humbling realization that lets us know that no one can boast of his own works or efforts - our boast can be in Jesus alone.

We are given a command from Jesus Himself to love one another. Knowing that we don't need to fear punishment if we fall short, what purpose does the command serve?

#### **1 John 4:18-19 ESV**

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.

We are given a command from Jesus Himself to love one another. Knowing that we don't need to fear punishment if we fall short, what purpose does the command serve?

#### **John 15:17 ESV**

These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Jesus is not saying "Do this...or else..." - His heart is clearly stated that this command is simply so - that we should love one another, because that's what is best for

everyone! – not with a “love” that is of this world, but a love borne from heaven. In this, we are truly friends of God.

**1 John 4:7-12 ESV**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

**TRUE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE COMMANDS A RESPONSE (Paradox)**

**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WILL MOVE YOU**

**UNCODNITIONALLY LOVING WILL MOVE OTHERS**

**REAL LOVE OVERFLOWS IN ABUNDANCE TO BE SHARED (Lasts eternally - Fruit that remains)**