

***“The Function Of God’s Friends”***  
***John 15:12-17***

**Introduction:**

1. This Morning:
  - We Are Going To Get Back Into:
    - Our Series Through The Gospel Of John!
  - So - Let’s Turn Back In Our Bibles:
    - To Where We Left Off Last Year:
      - In John 15!
2. Now - As We Head There:
  - I Want You To Think About:
    - What It Takes:
      - To Make A Friend!
  - To Make A Friend:
    - It Often Takes:
      - Having Something:
        - In Common!
    - Though - If That’s All There Is:
      - All Your Friend May Turn Out To Be:
        - Is Just An Acquaintance!
  - Because - To Make A Good Friend:
    - It Takes Something More!
      - It Takes Communication & Conversation:
        - Hopefully With Lots Of:
          - Time Face-To-Face!
  - But - What Does It Take:
    - To Make A Best Friend?
      - It Takes Something Even More!
        - It Takes Real Interest In Each Other:
          - And Real Affection For Each Other!
    - In A Word - It Takes:
      - Your Heart!
  - And - To Make A True Friendship:
    - It Takes All Of These Things:
      - In A Mutual Way! That Is:
        - True Friendship Between People:
          - Is A Two-Way Street!
3. But - What Does It Take:
  - To Make A Friend:
    - Of God? And - A Friend:
      - Of Jesus?
    - Because - As Good As It Is:
      - To Have A Friend On Earth:
        - Just Think How Much Better It Is:
          - To Have A Friend In Heaven!
            - Even God Himself!
  - According To James 2:23:
    - The First Patriarch - Abraham:
      - “Was Called The Friend Of God!”
    - Isn’t This Something:
      - That You Would Like To Be Called?
        - By God Himself?
  - What Does It Take:
    - To Make A Friend:
      - Of God?
  - And - According To Exodus 33:11:
    - We Are Told That:

- “The Lord Spake Unto Moses Face To Face, As A Man Speaketh Unto His Friend!”
- Isn't This Too Something:
  - That You Would Like To Experience?
    - With God Himself?
- What Does It Take:
  - To Make A Friend:
    - Of God & Of Christ?
- 4. Well - In The Verses We Come To:
  - In John 15 - Jesus Himself:
    - Tells Us What It Takes:
      - To Make One Of His Friends!
  - And - It Takes Something:
    - A Little Bit Different:
      - Than Any Other Friend:
        - That You Might Have!
  - Because - In 15:14:
    - Jesus Says - “Ye Are My Friends, If Ye Do Whatsoever I Command You!”
      - Read This Again!
- 5. Now - If Anyone Else:
  - Said That To You:
    - I'm Not Sure You Would Want:
      - To Be Their Friend!
    - No Matter How Much:
      - You Have In Common!
    - No Matter How Much:
      - Communication & Time You Have With Each Other!
    - No Matter How Much:
      - They Have Your Heart!
  - Because - We're Used To Friendship:
    - That Is A Two-Way Street!
      - Friendship Between Peers!
- 6. But - What It Takes:
  - To Make God's Friend:
    - *Is* Different Than What It Takes:
      - To Make Another Person's Friend!
    - Because - God Is Not:
      - Your Peer! And Neither Is:
        - Jesus - Who Though A Man:
          - Is Still Lord & Is Still God!
  - And So - What It Takes:
    - To Make A Friend Of Jesus:
      - Is Obedience To His Words!
    - But - When You Become His Friend:
      - There Is No Greater & No Truer Friendship:
        - In All The World!
- 7. And This Is Why:
  - When We Come To 15:12:
    - After Talking About The Joy:
      - That We Can Have In & Through Him In 15:11:
        - Jesus Then Offers - First:
- 1. ***An Important Reminder:***
  - Of The Function & Duty:
    - Of His Friends!
      - An Important Reminder!
  - And That Is:
    - Why He Repeats & Clarifies:
      - What He Told Us Already Back In:

- 13:34 - When He Said:
  - “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another!”
- And So Here - In 15:12-13:
  - Jesus Says - “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. / Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!”
  - Of Course - There Are Other Commandments That We Need To Obey!
  - But Here - Jesus Reminds His Friends Of:
- The Duty Of Friendship!
  - And That Is To Love One Another!
    - Now - In Other Places:
      - Jesus Also Talks About How:
        - We Are To Love Even Those Who Are Our Enemies!
    - But Here - Jesus Is Talking About:
      - Love Within The Family Of God!
      - Love Between Christians!
      - “Love One Another!”
  - We Have A Duty:
    - To Love Each Other - And:
      - To Befriend Each Other:
        - As Jesus’ Disciples!
    - Now - This Is Obviously:
      - A Great Challenge In & Of Itself!
      - But What Makes It An Even Greater Challenge Is:
- The Depth Of Friendship:
  - That Jesus Expects!
    - And That Is - To Love One Another:
      - “As I Have Loved You!”
  - Now - If You Remember From:
    - 13:34 - This Is What Made Jesus Commandment:
      - Such A “New Commandment!”
      - Because He Expects Our Love:
        - To Be Like His Love!
  - Now - When You Think About:
    - The Love Of Christ:
      - We Know That His Love:
        - Is Infinite!
    - So - How Is It Possible For You & For Me:
      - To Love As He Loves?
    - Well - One Thing To Keep In Mind Is:
      - Since His Love Is Infinite:
        - It Means That There Is Always Room For Us To Grow:
          - In Our Love For Each Other!
  - But Then - Jesus Gives Us A Way:
    - To Help Us Understand:
      - What He Means By This - And:
        - What His Kind Of Love Really Entails!
    - And So - In 15:13 - He Gives Us:
- The Demonstration Of Friendship:
  - Which Is The Greatest Form Of Love Possible!
    - It’s When - “A Man Lay Down His Life For His Friends!”
  - Of Course - Though Still Quite Rare:
    - We Have All Heard About:
      - Examples Of This Kind Of Love!
    - As When A Parent:
      - Gives Up His / Her Life:
        - For A Child:
          - Out Of Love!

- Or - When A Soldier:
  - Gives Up His Life:
    - For A Fellow-Soldier:
      - Out Of Love & Friendship!
- Now - Even Though:
  - A Limited & Finite Person:
    - Cannot Love With An Unlimited & Infinite Love:
      - Like Christ!
  - You Can Love Someone:
    - To The Furthest Extent Possible:
      - As A Person!
  - By Giving Your Life:
    - For The One You Love:
      - Selflessly & Sacrificially!
  - This Kind Of Love:
    - Is The Closest We Can Get:
      - To A Christ-Like Love!
- Which Is Why Jesus Says - There Is:
  - No Greater Love!
    - But - When Jesus Said This:
      - He Wasn't Just Thinking About:
        - What A Parent Or A Soldier Might Do - Hypothetically!
      - He Was Thinking About:
        - What He Was Going To Do - Actually!
          - For Those 11 Men Surrounding Him That Night!
    - But Not Just For Them!
      - Jesus Was Thinking About:
        - What He Was About To Do:
          - For You & For Me & For All Who Would Believe In Him & Abide In Him & Be His Friends!
      - Jesus Was About To Lay Down His Life:
        - For All Of Us - On The Cross Of Calvary!
          - Not Just To Spare Our Lives:
            - But To Save Our Souls!
  - Because - His Sacrifice:
    - Is The Greatest Example & Demonstration:
      - Of Love & Friendship:
        - That The World Will Ever See / Know!
    - And So - From Where We Stand Now:
      - On This Side Of The Cross:
        - His Demonstration:
          - Of The Greatest Form Of Love:
            - Ought To Cause Us & Motivate Us:
              - To Fulfill Our Function Of Friendship To Each Other!
    - 15:12 - "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you!"
      - Our Duty To Each Other:
        - As Christian Friends:
          - Is To Love!
        - And - We Constantly Need:
          - This Reminder! Don't We?
      - But - Our Duty To Jesus:
        - As His Friend:
          - Is To Obey!
    - Which Is Why Then:
      - In 15:14-15 - Jesus Tells Us:

**2. An Important Reality:**  
 - Of The Function & Duty:

- Of His Friends!
  - An Important Reality!
- 15:14-15 - “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. / Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you!”
  - Now - Even Though 15:14 Is A Conditional Statement:
    - I Don’t Believe Jesus Was Telling His Disciples This:
      - To Motivate Them To Be His Friends!
  - Instead - He Is Calling Them:
    - What They Already Are To Him!
      - “Ye Are My Friends!” - And The:
- Evidence Of Their Friendship:
  - Was Their Obedience To His Commands!
    - **IE:** Just Like When I Call Someone My Friend - The Conditions For Friendship Already Exist! And That Was True For The Disciples As Well! They Already Had Obeyed Him - And They Wanted To Keep Obeying Him - As Best They Could!
      - And So Jesus Encourages Them!
        - “Ye *Are* My Friends!”
  - And When You Strive To Do:
    - “Whatsoever” The Lord Commands You:
      - It Is Evidence That:
        - You Too Are:
          - His Friend!
    - And - As His Friend:
      - He Laid Down His Life:
        - For You!
  - Of Course - The First Command:
    - That Jesus Gives To Every One Of Us:
      - Is “Believe Me!”
        - Believe In All His Words!
        - Believe In All His Works!
    - Because - When You Believe:
      - To The Saving Of Your Soul:
        - It Means That You Have Become, Like Abraham, Like Moses, And Like These Disciples:
          - A True Friend Of God!
  - And - From There:
    - As The Friend Of God:
      - You Will Want To Continue:
        - To Hear His Word & Heed His Word - By Doing Whatsoever He Commands You!
  - Is There This Evidence:
    - In Your Life?
      - That You Are The Friend:
        - Of Jesus?
    - If Not - There Can Be!
      - But - If So - Just Think About These Words:
        - “Ye Are My Friends!”
    - I’m Sure That This Reality / Truth Must Have:
      - Shocked Them As Much:
        - As It Ought To Shock Us!
    - Because - Jesus Had To Give Them:
      - A Bit More:
- Explanation Of Their Friendship:
  - In 15:15 - Where He Adds:
    - “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you!”
  - Now - Even Though:

- Jesus Never Called His Disciples “Servants” Directly, He Often Did So:
  - Indirectly - As In 13:16 - When He Said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord!”
- And So - The Disciples Considered Themselves:
  - To Be Jesus’ Servants!
    - His “Doulos” - Or - His Slaves!
  - Every Time They Called Jesus:
    - Their “Lord” - It Meant That:
      - They Were Submitting Themselves To Jesus:
        - As His Servants & As His Slaves!
  - And Then - Even After Jesus Called Them:
    - His Friends - Those Who Were Called To Write The Books We Have In The New Testament:
      - They Called Themselves The Servants & Slaves Of Jesus Christ!
- So - Though They *Were* Jesus’ Servants & Slaves:
  - They Were *Not Only*:
    - His Servants & Slaves!
      - They Were His Friends!
  - And - Even Though You *Are* Jesus’ Servant & Slave As Well!
    - You Are *Not Only* His Servant & Slave!
      - You Are His Friend!
  - **IE:** Just As In Ancient Rome - The Emperor Was The Emperor Of All! In Effect - Everyone Was In The Empire Was A Servant Of The Emperor! But Some Of The Emperors Own Slaves Could Be A Closer Friend & Confidant Then His Own Family!
    - What Was True Then - In That Ancient, Roman Setting - Is Now Even More True - In A Universal Setting - For All Who Bear The Character & Evidence Of Being A Christian! You Are No Longer Just A Slave To God - You Are A Friend Of God!
      - Because - Jesus Has Shared With You - Through His Word & Through His Spirit - The Very Mind Of God!
- And This Is The Reality:
  - Of All True Christians!
    - What A Great Privilege It Is:
      - To Be Able To Say & To Sing:
        - “What A Friend We Have In Jesus, All Our Sins And Grievs To Bear! What A Privilege To Carry Everything To God In Prayer!”
  - But - Even Though It Is:
    - A Great Privilege:
      - Sadly - Sometimes Even Christians:
        - Can Take This Reality For Granted - Or Even:
          - Think That They Had Something To Do With It!
  - As If All It Takes:
    - To Make A Friend With God:
      - Is The Same Thing It Takes:
        - To Make A Friend With Man!
    - And So - To Keep Us Ever Humble:
      - Jesus Then Tells Us:

### 3. ***An Important Reason:***

- For This Friendship!
  - An Important Reason!
    - Its Because - 15:16 - “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you!”
  - How Is It That:
    - You - A Sinner:
      - Could Become A Friend:
        - Of The Savior?
    - It’s Not Because:

- You Chose Jesus:
  - To Be Your Friend!
- Its Because Jesus:
  - Chose You:
    - To Be His Friend!
- Its All Because:
  - Jesus Selected You!
    - The Word Translated “Chosen” Here:
      - Is The Same Word Translated:
        - “Elect” In Other Places In The New Testament!
          - And So - Everything We Learn About Election In Those Places:
            - Applies Here!
    - Though - There Is A Point:
      - In A True Christian’s Life:
        - Where They Choose To Put Their Faith & Trust In Jesus Christ:
          - The Biblical Fact Is:
            - You Could Never Have Chosen Christ If Christ Did Not First & Foremost:
              - Choose You & Enable You To Choose Him!
  - And The Most Remarkable Thing Is:
    - That He Chose You:
      - To Save You:
        - When You Were But A Sinner!
    - And That - He Chose You:
      - To Be His Friend:
        - When You Were Still One Of His Greatest Foes!
  - This Great Truth:
    - That - “I Have Chosen You!”
      - Is A Comforting Truth!
    - It Should Reassure You That:
      - Your Friendship With God:
        - Depends More On Christ’s Commitment To You Than On Your Commitment To Christ!
  - But At The Same Time - This Great Truth:
    - That - “I Have Chosen You!”
      - Is A Challenging Truth!
  - It Should Motivate You:
    - In Your Friendship With God!
      - That Because Of His “Amazing Grace” In Choosing You:
        - You Want To Live As His Friend & Fulfill Your Function & Duty:
          - As His Friend!
  - Because - Jesus Chose & Selected You:
    - For That Purpose!
      - And - For His Purpose!
    - But Even More - From This Verse:
      - We Can See That:
  - Jesus Set You Apart:
    - As Well!
      - “And Ordained You!”
  - Just Like The Old Testament Priests:
    - Were “Ordained” & “Set Apart” & “Sanctified” In Order To Serve God:
      - In The Tabernacle & Temple:
        - So Jesus Has A Special & Specific Plan For Every One Of His Friends!
  - And That Plan Is:
    - “That Ye Should Go And Bring Forth Fruit!”
      - Because - He Is The Vine:
        - And You Are His Branches!
    - Jesus Chose You & Called You:

- To Be His Friend:
  - So That You Might Be Free:
    - To Bear His Kind Of Fruit!
- Before - This Was Impossible!
  - You Were Utterly Barren & Fruitless For God!
    - But Now - As His Friend:
      - You Can Go & Be Fruitful!
- Fruitful In Your Walk:
  - With God!
    - As You Bear The Fruit:
      - Of Christlikeness!
  - Even The Fruit Of The Spirit:
    - Galatians 5:22-23 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, / Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law!”
- But Also - Fruitful In Your Witness:
  - For God!
    - As You Tell Others:
      - About Christ!
- Jesus Did Not Chose You & Ordain You:
  - To Sit Still In Your Christian Life:
    - But To Get Up & “Go!”
      - And Pursue After Godly Fruit!
  - And - In The Last Part Of This Verse:
    - He Tells Us How We Are To Do So!
- We Are To Pursue After Fruit:
  - In A Diligent Way!
    - In A Way - “That Your Fruit Should Remain!” (15:16)
  - Doing All You Can:
    - To Have Lasting Fruit!
      - As You Would Tend To A Garden Or To A Vine:
        - So That Whatever You Grow Is The Best There Is!
  - Since You Are Now The Friend Of Jesus:
    - Fulfill Your Function:
      - Diligently! But At The Same Time:
- We Are to Pursue After Fruit:
  - In A Dependent Way!
    - “That Whatsoever Ye Shall Ask Of The Father In My Name, He May Give It You!”
  - Recognizing That:
    - Without God & Without Christ:
      - You Can Do Nothing!
    - But - Always Depending On Him:
      - And Showing That Dependence:
        - Through Prayer!
  - Since You Are Now The Friend Of Jesus:
    - Fulfill Your Function:
      - With Both Diligence & Dependance!
    - Diligence For The Lord!
      - With Dependance Upon The Lord!
- After All - This Is The Special Reason:
  - Jesus Made You His Special Friend!
    - As Matthew Henry Once Put It:
      - “Those Whom Christ Ordains Should And Shall Be Fruitful; Should Labor, And Shall Not Labor In Vain!”

### **Conclusion:**

1. And So - Jesus Again Reminds Us:
  - Of The Function Of His Friends:
    - In 15:17 - When He Says:



- “These things I command you, that ye love one another!”
  - But - Instead Of This Just Being:
    - Just A Repetition Of 15:12:
      - He’s Not Telling Us:
        - What To Do!
      - He’s Telling Us:
        - How To Do It!
  - All Of The Things:
    - That Jesus Commands Us:
      - Will Help Us:
        - Fulfil This Basic Function:
          - That We Have As His Friends!
2. Especially That Command:
- That He Gives Us:
    - Back In 15:4 - “Abide In Me!”
      - When You Strive To Abide In Christ:
        - Through Faith & Fellowship & Faithfulness!
      - He Will Enable You & Empower You:
        - To Love One Another:
          - Even As He Loves You!
  - Isn’t It Amazing That:
    - Its All Connected To Christ!
      - It Is In Jesus & Through Jesus & To Jesus:
        - That You Are Able To Fulfill:
          - The Function Of Friendship:
            - That He Chose You & Called You To!
3. This Is What It Takes:
- To Make A Friend:
    - Of God! Now Live:
      - As His Friend!

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