

Jesus Loves Me

John 15:12-16

Introduction:

1. Most of us have many acquaintances, but few real friends
2. Sometimes those whom we deem friends, may turn against us
3. Even a devoted friend may fail us when we need him most
4. Peter, James and John fell asleep in the garden of Gethsemane when they should have been praying with Jesus
5. Peter denied the Lord 3x – “I don’t know him”
6. Judas betrayed the Lord and led the officials to capture Him
7. Our friendship to each other and to the Lord is not perfect, but His friendship to us is perfect
8. Friends helps when they can

I. Jesus Loved Us So Much that He Gave His Life for Us – vs 13

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. **13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

A. A Voluntary Sacrifice - "I lay down my life"

1. No one murdered Jesus or took his life against his will
2. He voluntarily laid down his life for the sheep

B. A Vicarious Sacrifice – “for his friends” – Isa 53:4-5

1. Vicarious means that the death of Christ was for others
2. His death was not for himself but for his friends
3. He was dying for us
4. Illustration - Starving child in Mogadishu ←

C. A Vicious Sacrifice

1. "Lay down my life" does not sound that bad
2. It does not begin to convey the depths of the suffering of the Savior when He gave up his life for us
 - a) *Betrayed by Judas and deserted by the disciples*
 - b) *He was beaten by temple guards - Lu 22:63-64*
 - c) *He was rejected by the very people He came to save*
 - d) *He was scourged - Matt 27:26*

- e) *He was mocked by the soldiers / crowned with thorns*
- f) *His beard was plucked from his face - Isa 50:6*
- g) *He was stripped naked - Matt 27:35*
- h) *He was crucified - nailed to a cross and allowed to die*
- i) *His form was marred beyond belief - Isa 50:14*
- j) *God the Father turned his back on Jesus when He became sin for us*

D. A Victorious Sacrifice

1. We might be tempted to say, "How tragic"
2. Yet his death was not tragic
3. When Jesus shouted, "It is finished" - it was a shout of victory - Jn 19:30
4. The resurrection showed that the righteous demands of God were forever satisfied by the death of His Son

II. Jesus Loved Us So Much that He Calls Us Friends – vs 14-15

- Friends - how full of condescension is such a title!
- Jesus made me his servant and disciple and then he says, I will not call you servants--I will call you friends.

A. Friends of Jesus Obey Him – vs 14

14 *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

1. The essence of sin is rebellion against God's law
2. Samuel rebuked King Saul for his failure to obey
1Sa 15:22b ...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.
3. Samuel equated disobedience with rebellion and sin
4. Those who are friends of Jesus will want to obey Him
5. Obedience is not the means of salvation but it is the inevitable result of salvation

B. Friends of Jesus Know Divine Truth – vs 15

1. Slaves usually just did what they were told and the master did not let them in on his plans
2. Masters don't disclose their purposes / goals to the slaves
3. In the OT, only Abraham was called the friend of God
4. Since we are Jesus' friends, He has shared with us all that He has heard from the Father – John 17:6-8

III. Jesus Loved Us So Much that He Chose Us – vs 16

- On the night before his crucifixion, our Savior encouraged and strengthened His disciples by telling them of his marvelous electing love

A. The Denial – “Ye have not chosen me”

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.

- "Chosen" is same word as "elect"
 - In Mk 13:20; Mat 24:22, 31; Col 3:12 it is translated "elect"
1. No One Comes to Christ on His Own
 - a) *Not one of the apostles came to Christ until he went after them and called them.*
 - b) *Not one of them chose Christ first, or naturally.*
 2. No one chooses Christ naturally.
 3. No sinner will ever come to Christ — unless the Father draws him — and then he chooses Christ – poem ←
 4. Naturally, We are Enemies of God
 - a) *Due to our sinful, totally depraved nature we were enemies of God*
 - b) *In our natural condition, we did not love God, we were not seeking God*
 - c) *Nothing in us could improve that sad condition*
 - d) *God had to come to us*
 - e) *That is why we say that the Christian life is a life of grace, from start to finish*
 5. No One Sees His Need of Christ
 - a) *In order to choose Christ — one must feel one's need of him — but no natural man ever does this*
 - b) *He knows he needs something, he wishes to escape wrath, but he does not feel, that he needs Jesus*
 - c) *No one will acknowledge his need of a physician, until he feels that he is sick*
 - d) *No one will sigh for a deliverer, until he feels that he is in prison or in difficulties.*
 - e) *Just so, no one will choose Jesus — until he feels that he is utterly lost without him.*

6. No One Sees Christ as Desirable

- a) *The natural man sees no beauty in Christ.*
- b) *He is like a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor loveliness.*
- c) *He sees beauty in the world — but not in the Son*
- d) *He is blind to all the excellencies, beauties, and glories of Immanuel; and therefore he will not choose him.*
- e) *He tries every way he can to do without Christ.*
- f) *He will do any work or endure any pain, rather than come to Christ — until the Holy Spirit sways his will.*
- g) *He will trust in sacraments, services, priests, the virgin Mary, anything, or anyone — rather than trust in Christ alone; and in such a state of mind, it is impossible that he should choose Christ.*

7. No One Can Come to Christ On His Own

- a) *The sinner's heart is enmity against Christ and, while carnal, cannot choose Christ.*
- b) *No words can be plainer than those of the apostle*
Ro 8:7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*
- c) *The fact is, no one ever did choose Jesus in his natural state, and no one ever will.*
- d) *We did not have more natural goodness which caused us to choose Him, but it was because he graciously drew us by his Holy Spirit to seek him*
- e) *It is sad that in so much of evangelism today emphasizing a person choosing Jesus Christ.*
 - (1) Jesus said, "You haven't chosen me, I have chosen you."
 - (2) As Paul begins to list the spiritual blessings that he has in Ephesians, chapter 1, "Thanks be unto God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ in heavenly places."
 - (3) When he begins to make a list of these spiritual blessings for which he is thanking God, what does he put at the top of the list? The fact that God chose him!
 - (4) Actually, that should be at the top of all of our lists.
 - (5) If God didn't choose us, then none of the rest of the benefits would be there.

B. The Assertion – “but I have chosen you”

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.

- This is an exciting thing - that God chose me
- Note the "double I" construction showing emphasis
 1. This was an Act of Sovereignty
 - a) *Jesus has a right to do as He will with His own*
 - b) *Jesus chose all his disciples - they did not come to Him of their own*
 - c) *The Savior chose you*
 - (1) He chose you before you believed on Him or even knew Him
Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
 - (2) We had no faith until He gave it
 - (3) We had no knowledge of Him until He imparted it
 - (4) We did not care about Him until he led us to feel our deep and utter need of Him
 - (5) He chose us before the foundation of the world so therefore, we could not choose Him first
 2. This Was an Act of Pure Love
 - a) *His choice was out of pure love*
 - b) *Not because of what we would do or be*
 - c) *He had a right to choose and he exercised that right*
 - d) *He has perfect wisdom and so He chose wisely*

C. The Purpose

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.

1. He Chose Us to Be His Witnesses
 - a) *Jesus ordained his disciples to be his witnesses, his ambassadors, and representatives, and he said, "Go and bring forth fruit."*
 - b) *Just so, he has ordained us, and bids us go into the world and represent him, and bear witness for him, and beseech men in his name to be reconciled to God.*

2. He Chose Us to Be His Servants

- a) *He chose us to be his servants, and it is our imperative duty to serve him.*
- b) *To serve him out of love.*
- c) *To serve him from gratitude, for the favor he has shown us.*
- d) *He chose us to go and bring forth fruit.*
- e) *Fruit as his ministers — converts to the truth.*
- f) *Fruit as his members — even the fruits of the Spirit, as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith.*

3. He Chose Us to Bear Permanent Fruit

- a) *He chose us to bear fruit that will count before God, and be valued by him.*
- b) *Fruit that will benefit man, and bring a verdict of approval from him.*
- c) *Fruit that will adorn the gospel, and win converts to his cause.*
- d) *Fruit that will honor himself, as the teacher and example of all that is good.*

Conclusion:

1. Is he your friend?
2. Have you trusted Jesus as Savior?
3. Christian – Are you His witness?
4. Christian – Is there fruit in your life?
5. Illustration of the missionary to the Navajo Indians and the Navajo woman

Jack Kelley, foreign affairs editor for USA Today tells this story. "We were in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in East Africa, during a time of famine. It was so bad we walked into one village and everybody was dead. There was a stench of death that gets into your hair, gets on your skin, gets into your clothes, and you can't wash it off. We saw this little boy. You could tell that he had worms and was malnourished; his stomach was protruding. When a child is extremely malnourished, the hair turns a reddish color, and the skin becomes crinkled as though he is one hundred years old. Our photographer had a grapefruit which he gave to the boy. The boy was so weak that he didn't have strength to hold the grapefruit so we cut it in half and gave it to him. He picked it up and looked at us as if to say "Thanks" and began to walk back to his village. We walked behind him so that he could not see us. When he entered the village, there on the ground was a little boy who I thought was dead. His eyes were completely glazed over. It turned out that this was his younger brother. The older brother knelt down next to his younger brother, bit off a piece of the grapefruit, and chewed it. Then he opened up his brother's mouth and put the grapefruit in. He worked the jaw up and down. The older brother had been doing that for two weeks. A couple of days later the older brother died of malnutrition and the younger brother lived. I remember driving home and wondering if that is what Jesus meant when he said, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for someone else"

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **5** But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

15 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.

"Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For Lord that could not be,
This heart would refuse Thee,
But Thou has chosen me.

Thou, free the sin that stained me,
Washed and se my free,
And to this end ordained me,
That I should live to Thee.

"Twas sovereign mercy called me,
And taught my opening mind;
The world had else enthralled me,
To heavenly glories blind.

My heart owns none before Thee,
For Thy rich grace I thirst,
This knowing, if I love Thee -
Thou must have loved me first!

Joh 17:6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. **7** Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. **8** For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

It is the business of a Christian to so manifest the spirit of CHRIST in his life that men and women will fall in love with our blessed LORD. People generally know little about CHRIST, but a devoted life magnifies and glorifies Him, thus leading them to trust Him for themselves. A striking instance of this came to my notice some years ago when I was engaged in a special evangelistic campaign among the mission stations of northern Arizona where devoted workers were seeking to present CHRIST to the Navajo and Hop Indians.

In company with Fred G. Mitchell, veteran Missionary to these neglected people, I sent one day to the mission hospital at Ganado. There my attention was drawn to a Navajo woman who occupied a bed in one of the small wards. She could not speak any English and my Navajo education was limited to about half a dozen words, so we could not carry on any animated conversation. Standing near her, Mr. Mitchell told me her story.

In the desert some ten weeks before, the missionary doctor had found her in a dying condition. The real circumstances were so horrible I shall not commit them to paper. Her cries of anguish had drawn the doctor to the place where she had lain helpless for four days and nights without food or drink. By that time, her case seemed absolutely hopeless. She was paralyzed from the waist down, could not move about; gangrene had set in and she was in a most pitiable state. A cursory examination led the doctor to feel that her case was hopeless. But he wrapped a clean blanket about her filthy body, put her in his car and hurried her to the mission station. He learned afterwards that the Indian medicine man had pow-wowed over her for some forty-eight hours and then announced that she was possessed of an evil spirit that could not be driven out. It was best to get her as far away from the hogan as possible, as otherwise the demons would haunt the place where she died, making it unsafe for others to dwell there.

In the hospital, further examination convinced the doctor that an operation might possibly save her life, but it would be a most dangerous and delicate one, and with perhaps one chance in a hundred that she might recover. The little group of missionaries were called in for prayer and the doctor undertook the operation. Mr. Mitchell told me that for nine days and nights afterwards he kept the patient under almost constant observation. Finally her fever disappeared and it was evident that she was on the road to recovery. As consciousness returned and she found herself in the comfortable hospital bed, waited on by a kind, little Navajo Christian nurse and assiduously looked after by the doctor, she was filled with wonder and amazement. When able to speak, she inquired of the nurse,

"Why did he do this for me? My own people threw me out to die; nobody wanted me; and he came and brought me here and has brought me back to life. Why did he do it? He is no relative of mine. I am a Navajo, and he is a white man. I cannot understand why he should do all this for me."

The nurse replied, "It is because of the love of CHRIST."

"Love of CHRIST," she exclaimed. "I never heard of 'love of CHRIST.' What is the 'love of CHRIST?' What do you mean?" The nurse tried to explain, but felt she was not making it clear; so she called for one of the missionaries.

For some fifteen days after that, one missionary or another talked to the patient for a few hours each morning. In order to make her understand, it was necessary to go clear back to the creation and make plain why CHRIST came into the world. The young woman listened with deep interest, her large gazelle-like eyes searching the missionary's face constantly as if for confirmation of so wonderful a story.

Finally, when she seemed to be well on the road to life again and her mind was clear and bright, the missionaries thought the time had come to urge her to definite decision. So they held another little prayer meeting together and then once more Mr. Mitchell told the story of redeeming love and tenderly inquired, 'My dear younger sister, (which is the characteristic way of addressing a Navajo Indian younger than oneself) do you not take this blessed SAVIOUR for yourself? Will you not put your trust in Him, turning away from the idols of your people, and worship the one true and living GOD? He has come to earth in the person of His Son and now He asks you to trust Him for yourself.'

In simple words he presented the claims of CHRIST for sometime, but there was no answer. The woman lay there perfectly quiet, but it was evident she was thinking everything over. After some little time the door at the other end of the ward was opened and the doctor looked in just to make sure that everything was all right with his patient.

She looked up and her bright eyes expressed the gratitude she felt as she softly replied in the liquid tongue of the Navajos, "If JESUS is anything like the doctor, I can trust Him forever." She had seen CHRIST magnified in a man and her heart was won.