

Friendship in the Gospel of Christ

James 2:23

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's *friend*

Exodus 33:11

The Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to a *friend*

John 15:25

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead I have called you *friends*, for everything I have learned from my Father I have made known to you

It's revealing to see the frequency of Jesus' use of the word *friend* in his conversations with others and in His parables. Even His detractors called Him a *friend* of sinners. Amazingly he addresses Judas by the name of *friend* immediately before his betrayal in the garden.

It's been said that "a *friend* is someone who knows all about you and still loves you". This sounds very close to Paul's statement in Romans 5:8 that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

These scripture make a strong case for the purpose of the Gospel of Christ being *friendship*.

The dictionary defines a *friend* as one joined to another in intimacy and mutual benevolence, or in modern terms "a close and intimate relationship involving unconditional love and a gift or blessings".

The Gospel (good news) of Christ is that Jesus' sacrifice has allowed for a restored *friendship* with God. However, if we go back to the beginning of John 15 and look at the text, we discover that Christ desires our blessing and friendship with Him to become the basis for friendship and blessings to others.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing

Jesus explains that we must rest in God's love and His power if we are to stay connected with Him and are to have a fruitful life filled with meaning and significance. A vine is a great picture of the connectedness God desires for us with Him and others.

As we abide in Christ's love we are able to love others as intended by God. He desires that we lay down our lives to Him and for others out of a sense of gratitude for His amazing love.

John 15:9

As my Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love.

God's love for us is incomprehensible as evidenced by Jesus willingly giving up His life on the Cross in order to pay the penalty for our sins (rebellion and disobedience to God's will). John 3:16 ***For God so loved the world*** that He gave up His only begotten Son that none should perish but have everlasting life.

God desires that we have an abundant life and that it not be wasted. Because love always desires the best for another, God has given us commands, not suggestions on how to live a life that is consistent with His intended purpose.

John 15:14

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

Obedying God is the most important thing we do.

John 15:12

My command is this: love each other as I have loved you

Obedying God is always in our best interest.

John 15:10

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete

Joy is always a byproduct of obeying God.

If our world is crying out for anything, it is for ***friendships*** modeled after those of Jesus. Unfortunately many never experience a ***friendship*** like the one described between King David and Saul's son Jonathan.

I Samuel 18:1

The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David and he loved him as he did his own

As rich as the scriptures are in painting a picture of true friendship it also paints a picture of ***the friendless***

Psalm 38:11

My ***friends*** and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay away from me.

Psalm 102:7

I lie awake. I have become like a bird alone on a roof

Luke 15:16

He longed to fill his stomach with the pods the pigs were eating but no one gave him anything.

John 5:7

Sir, the invalid replied, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in someone else goes down ahead of me.

It is well known that the Christmas season with its great message of hope can be a time of despair and loneliness for those that are without *friends*. Let each of us pray that God would place those who are lonely, broken and hurting in our path and that we may love and encourage them as our Lord and others have done to us.