

# WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

## Matthew 11:19

**Introduction:** There are three qualities of a friend that needs to be in every person's life who calls him or herself a friend. Of course, it goes without saying that Jesus meets and exceeds these qualities. What are these qualities?

1. Friends are faithful. Proverbs 17:17

**"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."**

Too many friends are thick and thin friends. When it gets thick, they get thin. In other words, when the problems come and they will come, your friends do not desert you. They are there in the good times and in the bad ones also.

You want to see problems in friendship, go in the ministry. I have seen men who will love you to your face and talk about you like a junkyard dog behind your back. Many times in the dark times, men who call themselves men of God will turn on a wounded comrade and make his wounds greater than they are. I have seen this very act by men who I have in the past had great respect.

Problems will come. Instead of destroying a person you call a friend, why don't you try consoling them. Some of our children may go astray in spite of all that we have done. Instead of kicking that person and condemning them for being a bad parent, why don't you go and weep with them and pray with them. They need you, not your criticism. Our adversary is doing a great job of accusing them of failure without your help. It is our duty as fellow believers to rally around those who are hurting and bind up their wounds with the balm of Gilead.

2. Friends are forgiving. Job 42:10

**"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."**

Job's friends had accused him of a multitude of sins. Of course, you and I know that this was not the reason for what had come in the life of Job. Satan thought he could cause Job to turn his back on the Lord. Job stood strong in the trial of his life. When the Lord revealed to Job all, Job forgave his friends of their accusations. I do not believe that Job ever mentioned their accusations again. He forgave, forgot and God made him fruitful.

3. Friends are friendly. Proverbs 18:24

**"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."**

Too many folks want friends but they are not willing to be friendly. To be friendly is not a hard task. It draws people to others.

Many of the folks at the nursing home liked a physical therapist by the name of Tom. Tom would go down the hall whistling and laughing. He knows everyone by name and calls his or her names. One night, I was walking down the hall whistling and one of our little ladies called out, saying, "Tom, what are you doing here at night?" Why is that? Tom has learned the secret of showing himself to be friendly.

What a friend we have in Jesus. It is more than a song; it must be a reality in the lives of folks who found that His claim is true. In Matthew chapter eleven, John the Baptist is in prison for standing true to the Word of God. But he becomes discouraged and asked his disciples to visit Jesus just to make sure He was the Messiah that was suppose to come.

After the disciples left, Jesus commends his friend, John the Baptist. He shows the comparison between John's ministry and his through the eyes of the Pharisees. The Pharisees said that John had a devil that did not eat and have meals with sinners and Jesus had a devil because he did. This is a good example of being double minded. The Bible says, **"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."** (James 1:8)

Jesus who was not concerned his critics, was given one of the greatest compliments in His ministry. He is a friend of sinners. Let us look at Jesus, the friend of many types of people. Let's look at a few of them.

Before going into the message, let me interject this first. We ought to be like the Lord Jesus in that we pay no attention to our critics when we are right with God. When we allow our critics to control our actions, we will get nothing of eternal value for the Lord.

### I. TO THE SINNER, JESUS IS A SAVING FRIEND.

Luke 19:10

**"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."**

As a friend to sinners the Son of God:

- A. Jesus gives hope to the ruined sinner who before was hopeless.

John 6:37

**"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."**

A perfect example is the Manic of Gardara in Mark chapter five. You could call this passage "The Conflict at the Sea." We see three truths in this passage. Time does not allow us to explore all the avenues of this passage. I will not be able to read the passage for time's sake. Let's see these three principles.

1. An uncontrollable sinner Vs. 1-5

This man could not be handcuffed and lived in the graveyard. He was at the end of his rope so to speak.

2. An undefeatable Saviour (sovereign)

Vs. 6-14

The man's only hope and help shows up. Jesus comes to him. Demons could not defeat Him. He is Lord of all even over the devil and his crowd. Jesus allows the demon to enter the swine. These pigs were smarter than most people. They want to get rid of the demons. I know that this is a play on words. But they committed suicide.

3. An unbelievable salvation Vs. 15-20

After the swine are drown and the owners show up to find out what happened to their herd of swine, the man who is uncontrolled is sitting at the feet of Jesus and suited in clothes and sane. The man's life is changed. Jesus is told to leave. So He does. What is a real shame that uncontrolled man is prized less than the lives of the swine. This man was someone's son. He may have been someone's husband. He may have been someone's brother. He may have been someone's best friend yet his changed life is viewed less than the lives of some pigs.

I know I told you that we were no going to read this entire passage but these verses shows what happened to this man.

Mark 5:18-20

**"And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel."**

- B. Jesus guarantees heaven to the repentant sinner who before was hell bound.

John 6:37

**"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."**

The Bible is full of examples. I will use just one.

Luke 23:33; 39-43

**"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."**

This man was being punished for his crimes. He was guilty of a capital crime. This man was receiving his just dues. But he repented and asked for Jesus to come into his life and take him to heaven. Jesus told him that he would be with Him today. Since Jesus said it, it was so.

## II. TO THE SAVED, JESUS IS A STEADFAST FRIEND.

John 13:1

**"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."**

- A. He's still our friend even when we sin.

1<sup>st</sup> John 2:1

**"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"**

When we sin, we sever our communion with the Lord but not the relationship of being a child of God. The Lord does not want His children to sin but when we do and we ask for forgiveness, He will forgive us.

1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

Sin does not have to be a major sin by our definition. It could be a bad attitude toward someone. But it takes the same blood to forgive this sin as it does the sin of murder.

Can we live sinless? You and I as long as we are in this body will never live completely sinless. There is no such thing as sinless perfection taught in the Bible. The only way you will be able to sinless is die and be taken to heaven. But we should strive to sin less. The more of the Word of God that we take in, the more it takes control of our thought patterns and change us into what God wants us to be.

- B. He's still our friend even when we stray.

Isaiah 53:6

**"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."**

Straying from the Lord does not have to be going on a drunken binge. It can be those simple truths that helped us grow in Christ that we have forsaken. We stray from God when we don't read our Bibles. We stray from God when we are absent without a good Biblical cause from church. We stray when we don't pray. We stray from God when we don't try to win folks to Jesus.

### III. TO THE SUFFERING, JESUS IS A SPECIAL FRIEND.

John 11:35

**"Jesus wept."**

His friendship to the suffering saints is special because of:

- A. The presence of His person is seen in this chapter. Death had not power around the Lord. Even funeral around him got brought to a stop. We find several accounts of folks who were dead that he brought back to life.

In this chapter of the book of John, we see the compassion and the humanity of the Lord Jesus. His friend, Lazarus, was dying. Lazarus' sisters sent word to the Lord Jesus that Lazarus was sick and very close to death. But the Lord Jesus delayed his trip to His friend. John McCormick said this about this passage: "The Lord is never in a hurry but He is never late." Some people would say that our Lord was late. But we know that all He did was always on time and right.

When He showed up, His very presence brought comfort to Lazarus' sisters. They both came to Him for help. John 11:32-35

**"Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept."**

Give your mind for a minute. Here Mary is at the feet of Jesus weeping over the death of her brother. She feels something on the back of her neck that was wet. As she looks up, she sees the tears that were going down to the face of Her friend. He was not weeping because He could not do anything about the situation. He was weeping because of the brokenness of His friends and the pain of their hearts. No one has to wonder that in the next chapter, we find Mary at His feet again washing His feet and drying them with her hair.

- B. The power of his peace

When Jesus came to this graveyard, He was in control of the situation. His words brought peace to the family. They were satisfied that Jesus would raise their brother in the resurrection of the righteous. They had peace because they had Jesus.

Romans 5:1

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"**

Philippians 4:7

**"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

#### IV. TO THE SHAMED, JESUS IS A SILENT FRIEND.

John 8:11

**"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."**

This woman is caught in the very act of adultery. The Pharisees bring her to Jesus so He can condemn her. Instead He condemns their sinful attitude and actions. This passage does not mean that the Lord Jesus was not concerned over her sin. His instructions to her are plain in that He tells to leave that life of sin and live a life that brings honor to the Lord.

- A. He's silent when it comes to condemning the sinner for his or her sins when He sees their repentance. He forgets their sins. Their sins are gone.
- B. He's silent when it comes to criticizing the saints for his or her shortcomings when he sees their remorse. If you have any criticism, it will be the enemy or your own guilty conscience.

**Conclusion:** Is He your friend? He wants to take the void that is in your life away and be with you always. Jesus gives us this promise in Hebrews 13:5-6 **"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."**

Are you here today as a sinner? He died for your and my sins. He has proven His friendship over and over again for more than two thousand years. He is still in the saving business.

Maybe you think that all of your friends have forsaken you. Jesus is that steadfast friend that sticks closer than a brother.

If you are suffering today, you need to remember Jesus understands your pain. He suffered the terrible pain of becoming sin for us so that we may become the righteousness of God in Him.

When everyone else is throwing rocks at you, Jesus is not trying to be the one with the first rock even though He has the right to do so. He wants you to return to Him. His friendship is a silent reminder that He is your friend and wants you to be right with Him.

Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus now. He is waiting for you.