

## What A Friend We Have In Jesus

Proverbs 18:24—*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

Friendships—No one can live a fulfilling life without them. I thank God for every friend I have. I've enjoyed the privilege of introducing a few to you today. In this message I would like to introduce you to another friend of mine—Jesus. He is not only my friend, He is my best friend.

I'm not talking about some fantasy friend. I'm talking about a real Friend you can communicate with and will abide with you through life and death. The person of Jesus is no myth or fairy tale character.

Albert Einstein said in the Oct. 26, 1929 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*: "No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. NO MYTH IS FILLED WITH SUCH LIFE."

➡ How do I know that Jesus Christ existed as an actual historical figure? One way is by what people wrote about Him—people who knew Him or who knew about Him around the time He lived on earth.

There is more historical evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ than there is for Mark Anthony or Cleopatra. More **books** have been written about Jesus Christ than any other person in history. More **songs** have been sung about Him than any other person.

Josephus (37-100 AD), the first century Jewish historian employed by Rome wrote: "Around this same time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it is right to call him a man. For he was a worker of amazing deeds and was a teacher of people who accept the truth with pleasure. He won over many Jews and many Greeks. He was the Messiah. Pilate, when he heard him accused by leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, but those who first loved him did not cease. For on the third day he appeared to them alive again, because the divine prophets had prophesied these and a myriad of other things about him. To this day the tribe of Christians named after him has not disappeared" (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.3.3 paragraphs 63-64).

- The greatest record of the person of Christ is the Bible, written by many men who knew Jesus personally.
- The Bible is greatest Book ever written! More copies of the Bible have been printed than any other book in all of history. The Bible has been **translated into more languages** than any other book in history. And the central character of the Bible is THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

➡ Another way to know if a person was a real historical person is by the indelible marks they left on the course of history. No one has left a greater footprint on history than Jesus Christ. He changed the world forever.

N.T. Wright, who taught at Cambridge and Oxford, was widely regarded as the leading Jesus historian in all of England. He wrote: "It would be easier, frankly, to believe that Tiberius Caesar, Jesus' contemporary, was a figment of the imagination than to believe that there was never such a person as Jesus." (N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Fortress, 1996).

➡ Our Scripture text describes two truths about any friendship:

1. The **Requirement** for Friendship—"A man that hath friends **must shew himself friendly**." If we are to make friends, we must take the first step.
2. The **Reliability** of a Friend—"And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." A friend will stick by you in good times and the bad. This verse describes the Friend we have in Jesus to a "T." Jesus showed Himself friendly by...

## I. **His COMING to us.**

- A. He took the initiative in being our friend.
  1. He didn't have to leave His heavenly throne to come to this sinful planet. He could have left us lost in our sinful condition and on the road to Hell.
  2. When we could not go to Him, He came to us. He **condescended** to where we are.

- Condescend – “To voluntarily descend from the privileges of superior rank, to do some act for one who is an inferior” (cf. Rom. 12:16). That is what Christ did.

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*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).*

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B. WHY? Because He loves us and wants us to be His friend.

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A couple was relaxing one evening. The wife asked her husband.

“Honey, how much do you love me?”

“My love for you knows no bounds,” he replied.

“Would you swim across the ocean for me?” she asked.

“I’d swim the widest ocean for you!” he promised.

“Would you climb a mountain for me?” she asked.

“I’d climb Mount Everest for you!” he bragged.

“Would you go to the store and get a mocha latte for me?” she asked.

(Long pause) “Oh, Sweetheart...It’s late, and I already took my shoes off.”

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➡ The Lord Jesus Christ didn't swim the widest ocean for us—instead He crossed the divide between heaven and earth. He didn't climb Mount Everest for us—instead, He climbed a greater mount—Mount Calvary—to bleed and die on an old rugged cross for your sins and mine!

**II. His COMPASSION for us.** *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13). Jesus spoke those words on the evening of His crucifixion.

➡ Jesus loves you. He proved His love for you by dying in our place.

➡ Luke 7:34 says Jesus was *“a friend of publicans and sinners!”* That is good, since we all qualify because we are all sinners.

- A. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. He did not cease to love us—*“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8).
- B. Isaiah 53:5— *“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him...”*

***“He was wounded...”***—Do you grasp the significance of these words? He was wounded for US! Zechariah says He was wounded in the house of His FRIENDS!

1. He was forsaken by His friends
2. He was beaten and scourged.
3. He was mocked and spit upon.
4. He was crowned with thorns.
5. Nailed to a cross made from a tree that He created.

➡ Jesus paid the debt of our sin He did not owe, for the debt we could not pay! Why? Because He loves us and wants to be our Friend.

➡ **ILLUS:** How many of you remember a time when you could not pay a debt, and a friend stepped in and paid it for you?

***“What A Friend We Have in Jesus; All our sins and griefs to bear!”***

### **III. His CONTINUING with us.**

➡ Proverbs 17:17, *“a friend loveth at all times.”* Jesus is referred to as *“a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”* Once you have accepted His friendship, He will “stick” by you, no matter what.

- A. He is no fair-weather friend who deserts us when we need Him most!
- B. Our sins do not turn away His love from us. Even when we sin, He acts as a friend.

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President Harry Truman once said, “If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.” In Truman’s experience, Washington, D.C. could be a lonely place. But so can Los Angeles... Atlanta... New

York... And Port Orchard. Wherever we live, most of us know the pain of losing a friend. Some of us have known the pain of being betrayed by a friend.

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1. Strangers can't betray one another. Only a friend can betray you. This is seen so clearly when Jesus was betrayed by Judas (Mt. 26:47-50). Judas was "*one of the twelve.*" Even though the Jesus knew the treachery in Judas's heart, Jesus still called Judas "Friend."
2. How many times have we also betrayed the Lord by our sin... our failure to stand up for Him... our denial of Him by the way we live.
3. Yet, Jesus still sticks close to us as our friend. There is no greater love! There is no greater friendship than that!

**SUMMATION:** This week I read a story about a farmer who had dog that was a very faithful and helpful companion to him around his farm for many years. But the dog was getting old and wasn't as useful as he once was. So, the farmer decided to drown him.

Taking the dog to a large river near his farm, the farmer got into a boat and rowed out to the deepest part. He picked up the dog and threw him into the river. The dog swam the best he could and tried to get back into the boat. Unswayed, the farmer repeatedly shoved the poor dog away from the boat but the dog kept swimming back. Finally, the farmer took an oar intending to beat the dog away from the boat. However, when he stood up in the boat to swing the oar he lost his balance and he fell into the river himself.

The farmer could not swim. The faithful dog caught hold of his clothes and brought the farmer safely to shore, saving his life.

Hearing this story, we may feel the heartless farmer deserved to drown. But wait... Just as that farmer treated his faithful dog, Jesus was treated the same way. When we had no need for Jesus, He stuck with us... When we tried to shove Him away, He never stopped seeking after us. When we were doomed to drown in our sins, Jesus came to our rescue to save us.

You could have **No Greater Friend** than Jesus, because ...

- ➡ There is **No Greater MAN** than the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - ➡ Who demonstrated **No Greater LOVE** than when He died on the cross for our sins.
  - ➡ Who worked **No Greater MIRACLE** when He rose from the dead on the third day.
  - ➡ Who offers **No Greater GIFT** to anyone who will receive it — Eternal Life (Rom. 6:23).

Since Christ is such a Friend to us, what follows? Friendship should be answered with friendship!

- We stick by for our friends. Will you stick by Jesus?
- We spend time with our friends. Will you spend time with Jesus?
- We seek to please our friends. Will you live to please Jesus?
- We trust our friends. Will you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

### **Jesus is your Friend—Will you be His friend?**

A - Admit you have sinned, and need Him.

B - Believe on Jesus.

- Believe that Jesus died for YOUR sins.
- Believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and is alive today.

C - Call on Him to save you.