

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

11.27.2022

THE WISDOM OF FRIENDSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION

John 15:12-17

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

II. WISE FRIENDSHIP

WHAT IS A FRIEND

- The Hebrew noun that we translate as friend refers to a person you know well and regard with affection and trust.
- A friend is someone you are close to and have an emotional attachment with.
- Friends are people we listen to and whose opinions we value most.
- In Wisdom literature, a friend is to be valued highly.

- Solomon and the sages instruct us to select friends who walk in the way of wisdom.
- Prov 13:20 Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.
- If we are seeking wise friends than those who would be our closest friends should fear the Lord and value wisdom.
- Prov 7:4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend,
- Our friends should be people who love wisdom as much as we do.
- Psalm 119:63 I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts.
- These are the kinds of friends you and I must seek to have if we want life-giving friendships.
- But not only should we want to have wise friends, we should seek to be a wise friend.

HOW TO BE A WISE FRIEND

A wise friend sticks with you no matter what

- Prov 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- Family members have obligations to one another because they are blood.
- But a friend chooses you.

- Prov 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- There are varying degrees of people we associate with that we might call friends because we spend time with them.
- But Solomon is trying to highlight the intimacy of a true friendship.
- Those friends that are so close that their relationship is even greater than the relationship between biological brothers.

A wise friend is faithful

- Prov 20:6 Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?
- Faithfulness is an indispensable quality of true friendship.
- Fidelity in friendships builds trust.

A wise friend is brutally honest

- Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
- Friends lovingly confront when they see their friend walking in sin and folly or when they are about to make a bad decision.
- A wise friend risks having a hard conversation.

- A false friend is like an enemy. They tell us what we want to hear.
- But a true friend wounds you in love.
- Learn to receive the corrective criticism of a friend.
- Don't be afraid to have a hard conversation with a friend.

A wise friend doesn't keep bringing up an offense

- Prov 17:9 Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.
- Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).
- A friend always thinks the best, believes the best, and overlooks offenses.
- Love is not resentful, love does not keep a record of wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5).
- If you keep bringing up the faults of others you will end up separating with a close friend.
- If you repeat the offense to someone else in gossip, you will not keep a close friend.

A wise friend gives wise counsel

- Prov 27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.
- A wise friend gives advice from the heart because they have the best interest of their friend in mind.
- Heartfelt advice and counsel from a friend refreshes the soul.

A wise friend preserves his closest relationships

- Prov 27:10 Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a

neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

- The implication of this proverb has to do with going to someone if you need help.
- When relationships are maintained, you can get help from your immediate circle of friends or even from one's family's friends.
- Seek to preserve the health of your relationships.

A wise friend enriches

- Prov 19:4 Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- Everyone wants to be a friend to a rich person, but few want to associate with a poor person.
- The rich person has more to offer in a relationship.
- People want to be around those who lift them up, enrich, and edify them.
- The person who enriches others will not have a shortage of people who will want to be their friend.

A wise friend sharpens others

- **Prov 27:17** Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
- The rubbing of iron against iron produced a sharp edge on a sword.
- There has to be friction and tension for that to happen.
- This is what happens in true friendships, there is sharpening.
- The ongoing struggles and challenges of life dull the edge of our blade, and we need the friction of life-giving relationships to sharpen us.
- This is why we need friends in our life.
- Without a true friend we remain dull and ineffective.

A wise friend does not withhold good and kindness

- Prov 3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you.
- Wise friends are attentive to the needs of their friends.
- They don't wait for their friends to bring up a need, they initiate.

A wise friend is sympathetic

- Prov 27:14 Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.
- Wisdom is saying the right thing at the right time as fits the occasion. This verse is an application of that wisdom principle.
- The principle is to take other people's mood into consideration.
- The loud cheerful person intends to bless but it won't be received by the other person because it is coming at the wrong time.
- A wise friend knows how to read their friends and they have an apt and fitting word at the right moment.

A wise friend isn't a drain on a friendship

- Prov 25:17 Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house, lest he have his fill of you and hate you.
- There are some people who can't take a hint and overstay their welcome.
- Don't emotionally drain your friends.
- A person who does this frequently will become a nuisance rather than a friend.
- If all you do is take from the relationship and don't pour back into it, you will soon find that a close friend will become a distant friend.

A wise friend avoids what can spoil a relationship

- Prov 17:18 Be not one of those who give pledges, who put up security for debts.
- The sages continually warn of not putting up security whether for a friend or a stranger.
- Nothing separates friends faster than money owed and not repaid.
- A true friend understands there are boundaries that shouldn't be crossed in relationships.
- When the situation arises because there is a need, then just be generous, give without expecting anything in return.

A wise friend is gracious with their speech

- Prov 22:11 He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
- The wise friend has wise words on their lips because they have a pure heart.
- Seek out friends who edify with their words and whose words are seasoned with grace.

Wisdom teaches that there are certain people we should avoid.

- Prov 16:28 A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.
- Dishonest people, liars, and gossips don't make good friends.
- Prov 22:24-25 Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.
- People who are easily angered and easily offended will not make good friends.
- Prov 25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.
- A contentious person brings a lot of strife to a relationship.

- We could best sum up all of these principles for how to be a wise friend with the ethical principle Jesus gave his disciples:
 - **Luke 6:31** And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.
 - If you want to have wise friends, be a wise a friend.

III. GOSPEL-SHAPED FRIENDSHIPS

- Friendships are not easy but they are worth pursuing.
- They must especially be pursued among the brethren.
- If we want wise friends who fear the Lord, we will not find them in the world.
- James warns us that friendship with the world makes us an enemy of God (James 4:4).
- Does that mean we can't have friends who are unbelievers? No, of course not.
- But we must remember that if all we surround ourselves with are people who don't fear the Lord, who don't follow Christ, we will be corrupted.
- Paul reminds the Corinthians, "Bad company ruins good morals (1 Cor 15:33)".

- It is in the context of a life-giving fellowship of believers that all of the "one-anothers" found in the NT are to be exercised.
- **We can begin cultivating gospel-shaped friendships by living out of the grace of God.**

- Don't place unrealistic expectations and burdens on a friendship.
 - The gospel reveals that we are all sinners so we know that a friend will sin against us at some point, they will fail us.
 - So we walk in grace in our friendships. We are quick to forgive and extend grace.
 - Grace frees us from having to perform for others in order to maintain a relationship.
- **We cultivate gospel-shaped friendships by building up one another in Christ.**
 - We deposit into others more than we withdraw.
 - We seek out the friendships that are mutually edifying.
- **We cultivate gospel-shaped relationships by speaking the truth in love.**
 - The truth must be spoken in humility, kindness, love, and grace but it must be spoken.
 - We can't have authentic, wise friendships, without loving confrontation and correction.
- **We cultivate gospel-shaped friendships by being a gospel-shaped friend.**
 - That means we understand that friendships are sacrificial.
 - They will require an investment of our life, an investment of our heart.
 - It means being there for others when they need us, not when it is convenient for us.
- Too many people face loneliness and isolation.
 - Hospitality is the most under-utilized tool in cultivating new relationships.
 - Invite someone over to your house for lunch or dinner.
 - Treat someone to a meal.
 - Invite someone to go with you to an event.
 - Connect to one of our City Groups
- **If you want wise friends and you want to be a wise friend, meditate on Christ's friendship with you.**
 - In Christ we find the supreme example of true, wise friendship.
 - When we look at the qualities of a wise friend we find each of these things perfectly exemplified by our Lord.
 - He is the friend that loves at all times.
 - He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother.
 - He is always faithful, always truthful.
 - He has covered all of our offenses.
 - He is the sum of all wisdom and his counsel is perfect
 - He preserves our relationship with Him
 - He enriches us in every way
 - He sharpens us through the sanctifying work of His Spirit
 - He does not withhold any good and kindness from us
 - He knows and understands us like no one else
 - And He is gracious in every way.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?