



Discussion Guide

Sermon Synopsis

We are made for friendship, but there is a great lack of fulfilling friendships in our world today. We long for close friends, and yet we seem to be unable to get out of our own way to experience flourishing friendships. Friendships just seem too hard, too risky, and too messy to be worth it. And yet, Jesus calls those who follow Him friends and commands us to live in a community of loving friendship with one another. Jesus' loving friendship of us serves as our model for loving friendship with one another, and our relationship with Him serves as the source of our ability to live in loving friendship with other followers of Jesus. In a world starved for friendships, followers of Jesus have the opportunity to display the richness of friendship found in Jesus and His church.

March 24, 2024

John 15:12-17

One Liner of the Week

“The friends of Jesus are friends of each other, loving each other as Jesus loves us.”

Food for the Soul

Monday: John 15:1-11

Tuesday: John 15:12-17

Wednesday: Proverbs 17:17

Thursday: Proverbs 18:24

Friday: Proverbs 27:9

Saturday: 1 John 3:16-18

Sunday: 1 John 4:9-10

People who have been genuinely saved are the recipients of a great miracle. It's the miracle of all miracles in fact. Scripture highlights very prominently many instances of God intervening in the natural order of the world bringing to pass things which, according to science and human experience, are utterly impossible. We gravitate towards these things because they give us a clear sense of God's immense power, of His omnipotence (complete power). But, friends, I declare to you that the greatest miracle of all is this: That a Holy God would save even one sinner. That is the miracle of miracles. He did it all out of love. Love for His called and chosen people. *As a group, read 1 John 3.* Focus your discussion on the first three verses. **Why did God purpose to save the Church? What does His saving of the Church produce in it (verse 3)?**

Genuine salvation always produces genuine transformation... No exceptions. This isn't to say that we'll be perfect. Heaven knows, I'm not perfect. Lord, help us. But we will be better as we obey our Savior, seek Him in the Bible, participate in the life of the Church, and engage in the ordinances (Baptism, The Lord's Supper) by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. As we do these things, new affections take root in our souls and grow over time. One of these new affections is a new concern, a new love, a new depth of regard for people and especially the people of God's Church. *Read 1 John 3:13-20 again very slowly and very carefully.* **According to the Apostle John, the Disciple whom Jesus loved, what is, really, the ultimate proof that a man or woman is saved?**

So, we may say, then, that the Christian life is a life in which love for people is a top tier issue. We are to love people and especially are we to love our fellow Christians. I get it, though. Being truly loving is hard. Our default inclination is to be selfish rather than selfless, to be unloving rather than loving. And this is where Christian community, the Church, comes into the equation. *As a group, read Hebrews 10:19-25.* I know... We've been in this passage before. But, dear friends, its an incredibly important passage for us in understanding the absolute necessity of the gathered Christian community. **What happens when Christians gather together? To what are we encouraging one another?**

May God bless you All!