

Friends of Jesus

- A. **JOH 15:13-15** is a unique occurrence of the word “friends” in three successive verses.
1. It is a very special identity to be known as *the king’s friend*. **1KI 4:5**.
 2. These sons of Abraham were sharing in his special relationship with God. **JAM 2:23**.
 3. They later still called themselves servants (**2PE 1:1; JAM 1:1**) for the honor which Christ puts upon men should not puff them up but humble them. **1TI 1:15**.
- B. These verses leave no doubt as to what extent Christ’s command to brethren to love one another should be taken. c/w **JOH 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1JO 3:16**.
1. Christ Himself would set the supreme example.
 2. It was “for his great love wherewith he loved us” (**EPH 2:4**) that Jesus was “...wounded in the house of His friends” (**ZEC 13:6**).
 3. It was this great dynamic of self-sacrificing love that moved Napoleon Bonaparte to say, “Alexander, Caesar and Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force! But Jesus Christ founded His upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. I myself have inspired multitudes with such affection that they would die for me. But my presence was necessary. Now that I am in St. Helena, where are my friends? I am forgotten, soon to return to the earth, and become food for worms. What an abyss between my misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ; who is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth. Is this death? I tell you, the death of Christ is the death of a God. I tell you, JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.”
 4. If we love God, it is because He loved us first. **1JO 4:19**.
- C. The greatness of Jesus’ love for us is magnified by fact that He was and is so much more of a Friend to us than we are to Him.
1. As resistant as we sometimes are to His commands, as neglectful as we sometimes are in our duties to Him, as dishonoring as we sometimes are in showing love with lips rather than life, with friends like us, who needs enemies?
 2. By nature we were “...alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works” (**COL 1:21**).
 3. But He had already taken our pathetic nature into account to reconcile us to God. **ROM 5:8-10**.
- D. Whereas Jesus’ death for us was not conditioned upon our performance, His *practical recognition* of us as His friends is certainly so. **v. 14**.
1. Those who define their lives by friendship with the world are not His friends. **JAM 4:4**.
 2. As true love and friendship are tied together here, so also is our love for God proved by obedience. **JOH 14:15, 21; 1JO 5:1-3**.
 3. Note “my commandments” (**JOH 14:15, 21**), “whatsoever I command” (**JOH 15:14**).
 - a. Let us not pretend to love Jesus or be His friend by defying His commandments.
 - b. Let us not pretend to love Jesus or be His friend by substituting the commandments of men for His. **COL 2:20-23; TIT 1:14; ISA 29:13, 18**.
- E. “Henceforth I call you not servants...” (**v. 15**). c/w **MAT 10:24-25**.
1. henceforth: From this time forth; from now onwards.
 2. This shift accords well with Christ’s example of condescension in washing their feet. **JOH 13:13-17**.
 3. It is also in keeping with His mission of service. **MAT 20:28; LUK 22:27**.
 4. “...for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth...” (**v. 15**).
 - a. Customarily, a master/lord does not disclose intimate details to servants but may do so to a trusted friend.
 - b. Under the Law, the church was as a servant (**GAL 4:1-3**) and accordingly under a

- dispensation of relative darkness. **ROM 16:25; EPH 3:4-5.**
- c. But with Christ's coming the veil was being lifted and these men were the special beneficiaries and appointed carriers of His light. **MAT 13:11, 16-17.**
5. "...for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (v. 15).
- a. He had declared the Father and the perfect love which bound Him to the Son. **JOH 1:18; 17:26**
 - b. This binding love carried over to them as an incentive to follow it. **JOH 15:9.**
 - c. Whatever was lacking in their perception and understanding, the Spirit would supply them. **JOH 14:22-26.**
- F. Through the apostles' works and words, we by faith are brought into a fullness of understanding of His love for us that even the angels inquire after. **1PE 1:8-12.**
- 1. We know for sure that a way into the holiest has been opened by His blood. **HEB 10:19-20.**
 - 2. We know for sure that we have an Advocate to plead our case. **1JO 2:1.**
 - 3. We know for sure that we may boldly approach our Holy God through Him Who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities. **HEB 4:15-16.**
- G. He has been and is a better friend to us than we have ever been to him. But what a friend we have in Jesus.