

June 4, 2017

A Friend to Jesus John 21:15-17

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Everyone needs a friend, and the _____ friend you'll ever have is Jesus Christ. Today, we're exploring the friendship we have with Jesus. We go to God's Word, because we _____ God is our friend. He loves us fully and freely. His love is _____ than we can imagine. Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare his own _____ but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" Few treasures in life exceed the _____ of friendship. Heaven is beautiful, not only because God made it so, but more because of _____ will be there. The Lord yearns to be our friend, now and forever. I know you're thankful for His love. Someone said, "A friend is one who knows all about you and _____ likes you." The Lord Jesus went to the _____ for sinners. He gave His love freely to people who didn't deserve His love. Yes, He knows all our sins and our weaknesses. He knows our thoughts, good and evil. He knows all our secrets. In spite of it all, He created us and gave Jesus to save us from sin. He loved us as sinners, but wanted to provide something better for us than the pleasures of sin.

The more we get to know God, the more we _____ Him. The more we love Him, the more we want to _____ Him. The more we serve Him, the more abundant our _____ become. Friendship with Jesus is the greatest _____ of life. Let's explore friendship with the Lord.

Our reading today comes from John 21:15-17 – Jesus has a conversation with Peter. Love is not just about _____ we love someone, but also _____ it out in our lives.

Throughout His days, Jesus _____ people who wanted to take His life and end His ministry. Matthew chapter two tells how Herod tried to _____ Jesus as an infant after the wise men inquired about the birth of the king of the Jews. Sadly, Herod did kill _____ infants in Bethlehem, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy that Rachel would _____ for her children. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, is buried in Bethlehem; you can visit her tomb even to this day.

The New Testament tells of Jesus coming to His hometown of Nazareth to _____. The Lord taught things they didn't wish to _____. They had a hard time believing a hometown boy could be the Messiah. Luke 4:28-29 says, "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with _____. And they rose up and they drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of a hill on which their town was built, so that they could _____ Him down the cliff." Jesus was able to _____, but you can imagine His heartbreak and disappointment over the loss of His lifetime friends at Nazareth.

John chapter eight tells of the experience Jesus had in the _____ in Jerusalem as He defended Himself before the Jews. Jesus spoke of Abraham's rejoicing to see His day. John 8: 57-59 says, "So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet _____ years old, and have you seen

Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, _____ Abraham was, I _____.’ So they picked up _____ to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Again, in chapter ten of John, Jesus revealed to the Jews that He and the Father are _____. But this didn’t set well with the Jews. They thought He was blaspheming by _____ to be the Son of God. So John 10:31 says, “The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.”

John chapter eleven tells how Jesus _____ Lazarus from the dead. When the report of this miracle reached the _____ of the Pharisees and chief priests, they convened a council. They said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many _____. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” (John 11:47-49). Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said it would be _____ for one man to die than for the whole nation. From that day on they made _____ to put Jesus to death. Matthew 26:4 says they _____ together to arrest Jesus by stealth and to kill Him.

The disciple, Judas Iscariot, whom Jesus named an apostle and entrusted the moneybox, became greedy and was a _____. **Read Matthew 26:14-16.** The Bible says, “And he came up to Jesus at once and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ And he _____ Him” (Matthew 26:49). Ah, this kiss must have broken the Lord’s _____. It was cruel and selfish. There was no _____ to be found in that kiss. They bound the hands of Jesus and they led Him away.

During His trials and crucifixion, they humiliated Him; they mocked Him falsely; they accused Him, slapped Him, scourged Him; and they _____ Him to carry His own cross. Pontius Pilate found no _____ in Him worthy of death, so he tried to find a way to _____ Jesus by offering to release a prisoner the Jews wanted. The people refused to free Jesus and cried for Barabbas.

When Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus who is called the Christ, the people showed no _____ on Jesus. Matthew 27:22-23 reveals that they all said, “‘Let Him be _____!’” And Pilate said, ‘Why, what evil has He _____?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” Though Pilate _____ his hands of this matter in front of the crowd, the people said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” These bloodthirsty people callously called for the _____ of an innocent man because they were envious and they were afraid of what Rome might do.

So, they _____ Jesus away to Golgotha, and there they crucified Him. While suffering on the cross, His _____ showed no mercy. They were not _____ just to do away with Him; they had to humiliate and slander Him as well. **Read Matthew 27:39-44.**

Jesus endured terrifying physical _____ on the cross; but when the crowds watching added insult to injury, it must have pierced his heart. Jesus could see a _____ picture. He went to the cross to _____ the very sinners who put Him there. The Lord endured _____ against Himself without becoming _____ to others.

The Bible says, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an _____, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither

was _____ found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He didn't revile in return; when He suffered, He didn't threaten, but He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our _____ in His body on the tree, that we might _____ to sin and _____ to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Jesus blesses us and blesses all, even when people do their _____ to Him. He bore our sins, so that we might _____ an old life of sin to live to righteousness. The Lord so befriended us that He _____ the way for us to have a new and better life, filled with faith, hope, and love. The Lord Jesus does not _____ people where He found them. He heals what is _____ in our lives. He lifts up those who are down. He _____ our sins. He gives us _____ that we can leave old habits of which we're ashamed and can have new lives filled with love and righteousness.

No one will ever be a _____ friend to you than Jesus Christ. Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend loves at _____ times. The Lord loves you for who you are and who you will _____. Remember, God _____ what we can become with His grace and help. By His grace, He forgives our past, helps us day to day, and guides us to an _____ home in the future. His love _____ us every step of the way.

Christianity is friendship, friendship with God and with everyone who loves God. The New Testament describes Jesus as the "friend of _____" in Matthew 11:19. Jesus called His disciples "friends" (Luke 12:4 and John 15:14). He wants everyone to _____ with Him, not _____ Him. He wants their friendship to be _____, to be strong, and to last forever. He wants _____ than to just be an acquaintance or fair-weather friend. He wants people who will _____ their faith and loyalty to Him.

The Lord Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone _____ his life for his friends" (John 15:13-14). Then He said, "You are my friends if you do what I _____ you." Jesus was willing to die for you to save and _____ you. Do you really think He would do anything to _____ you or to lead you astray? He asks that you befriend him by being _____ to His commands. The Lord wants you to obey Him because you love Him. But the Lord is not being overbearing or cruel to us when He asks us to obey Him.

The Lord is not trying to _____ us with His commands. This is crucial. Some hear the word command and they get the _____ idea. The Lord never gives us a command to _____ us, to manipulate us, or to subdue us. God's commandments don't enslave; they set us _____. Some people don't like following the _____ or being told what to do. Our Father in Heaven is indeed a _____ Father to us. He gives us His commands because He knows that His instructions will bless our lives and keep us from _____ ourselves.

Every commandment, in the Word, leads to _____. Every commandment helps us to _____ the pitfalls of life. Every commandment keeps us on the straight and narrow road that _____ to an abundant life. Love leads us to do what is _____, what is best, and what brings a blessing to all. The commandments of Jesus are designed to _____ us how to do just

that! The more we walk in the Lord's way, the more we see how God was loving us _____ His commandments. God's commandments are God's _____ to us.

In the Old Testament, Moses reminded Israel as they were about to enter the Promised Land, "For what great nation is there that has a god so _____ to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we _____ upon Him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this _____ that I set before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:7-8). If that were true of the Law of Moses, how much more true is it of the _____ of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament? We have a great God who has blessed us with the _____ of righteousness. Oh, what a wonderful _____!

The Lord has also blessed us with a spiritual family, the _____, who are friends. The little epistle of Third John ends with the words, "The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." The Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to _____ all over this country and into other countries to meet my brothers and sisters in Christ. Because of Christ, they are my brethren and also my friends.

The Bible calls us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). Friendship means that we _____ about others personally, sharing their joys and their pains. We take care of each other. Being a friend to Jesus means being a friend to His _____ and all the people who are in it. They are indeed _____.

Being a friend to Jesus means that we'll take our _____ with Him. We believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We pledge our lives to _____ Him and Him alone. We lovingly, respectfully but firmly stand up for His teaching and for His teaching alone and for His morals. To be a friend to the Lord Jesus means we _____ Him fully and freely. What He calls sin, we recognize as _____. What He calls false, we recognize as _____. Friendship with Jesus calls us to serve Him, to preach the gospel, and to sacrifice ourselves. Oh, we do this with love, and joy and thankfulness for the opportunity. Are you a friend of Jesus?

As the Gospel of John closes, the Lord Jesus has his first personal conversation with Peter after the resurrection. Only days before, Peter had denied the Lord _____ times. **Read today's text again – John 21:15-17.**

I've wondered if the Lord Jesus might _____ that question to you or to me today, "Do you love me?" or "Do you love me more than these?" Friend, how would you answer? Can you say that you have been _____ to the Lord, that you're attending church faithfully, you're reading your Bible, you're praying daily, and you stand up for what is true and right? Are you a friend to Jesus? To become a friend to Jesus, the Lord said we should _____ His commandments. You must _____; without faith it is impossible to _____ God (Hebrews 11:6). Then you must turn from everything sinful and offensive to Jesus and turn to what is right and pleases the Lord. That's _____. Confessing Jesus as the Son of God is also necessary and being _____ into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins is also necessary just as the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38.