



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
12500 E. 183rd St., Cerritos, CA 90703
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January 31, 2010

Theme: Jesus Is My Friend

Text: Various Passages

This week we will reflect again upon the theme, "Jesus Is My Friend." From the very beginning the Scriptures teach that we were created for relationship. We know that because we are created in God's image. Our God is a Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From eternity past and throughout the eternal future God lives as The Triune God. This means that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in an eternal love relationship with each other. Jesus declared this when He prayed for His disciples just before His death: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, to see my glory, the glory you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world." If we are created in the image of God, this means that we were created to glorify God through relationship with Him and with other people—especially with believers.

First of all, I want to say something about the close, personal, and intimate relationship that God desires to have with us. The OT and the NT describe this relationship as being like the relationship that God intends for a husband and wife. Isaiah prophesies about this love, "For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth." In the NT when Jesus was asked why his disciples did not fast he gave this answer: "Can the guests of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast." Jesus puts Himself in the place of God when He refers to himself as the bridegroom. God wants His relationship with His people to be as intimate as the relationship between a husband and wife.

There is another reason that we can say that we were created for relationships. When God created human beings, he didn't create two males or two females; He created a male and a female. Jesus taught that God did this so that they could enter into the relationship of marriage. All through Genesis 1, God declares that His creation is good. At the end of the chapter He declares that is very good. But then at Genesis 2:18, he says that it was not good that the man should be alone—so He created woman. The fact that the Scriptures describe the relationship between Himself and His people in terms of marriage tells us that God wants to have a close and personal and intimate relationship with Him.

Having said that, we can come to several conclusions about the love that God wants us to receive. First we observe that God took the first step. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this: that he lay down his life for his friends." His love for us is so intense that He is willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice so that we can be His friends. It is one thing to make friends with someone who is friendly to us; but Paul writes that God acted to love us



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before we loved Him. In fact Paul writes that God loved believers when they were His enemies. That is intense love!

Second we can say that our first task is to receive God's love for us through Christ Jesus. In John 15:9, Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love." At John 17:23, Jesus says that God has loved us just as much as He has loved Jesus. That's a stunning thing to say! Try to imagine how much God loved Jesus and then you will know how much God has loved us. I didn't make that up! Jesus said it!

Third, we can say that our second task is to obey Jesus command. Jesus says in John 15:14, "You are my friends if you do what I command." What is his command? His command is that we love one another just as he has loved us. How did he love us? He laid down his life for us. Most of us will not be called to literally die for our friends. But we can do this figuratively by setting aside our own will so that we can carry out the will of God, which is to love one another.

Finally, we can say that Jesus gave this command so that we might be completely joyful. "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and that your joy might be complete." We do not often think that keeping commandments is a joyful thing. But Jesus promises that keeping His command will bring joy. This doesn't mean that there will not be difficulties or hardship or problems. But it does mean that we will find joy in obeying Jesus. As the apostle John wrote in his first letter, "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."