

The Power of Friendship

First Samuel 23.16

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 23, In the year of our Lord, 2014

Scripture Reader and Reading: Wayne Duncan – John 15.13–15

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – No suggestions

Prelude:

I. Everyone needs a friend like Jonathan, or rather

A. everyone needs to be a friend like Jonathan,

16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God (1Sa 23.16).

B. That is the ultimate friend.

1. Some friends lead us away from God.

2. Other friends lead us to God.

a) You have been friends who have strengthened my hand in God.

b) I hope that I have strengthened your hand in God.

II. Everyone needs a friend who refreshes you, and

A. everyone needs to be a friend who refreshes his friend.

18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men (1Co 16.18).

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain... (2Ti 1.16).

B. I want to refresh you my friends.

1. As Job's friends debated and accused him,

2. he said something to them that I believe we preachers need to think on.

a) I use a sermon outline template that I created

b) to guide me in my sermon preparation.

(1) As I prepare the exhortation and invitation,

(2) I use this passage from Job to remind me of what you need,

2 “How have you helped him who is without power?
How have you saved the arm that has no strength?
3 How have you counseled one who has no wisdom?
And how have you declared sound advice to many?
4 To whom have you uttered words?
And whose spirit came from you?”
(Job 26.2–4)

(a) Since you are my friends, I want to

- i) help you,
- ii) save you,
- iii) counsel you, and
- iv) declare sound advice to you.

3. How can I be a friend without doing those things?

9 Ointment and perfume delight the heart,
And the sweetness of a man’s friend gives delight by hearty counsel.
(Pro 27.9)

17 As iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.
(Pro 27.17)

C. For the reasons Job 26 listed, I direct you to God constantly.

1. A man approach me once and said
 - a) that I should preach PMA, Positive Mental Attitude, and
 - b) pepper it with Scripture to make it sound good.
2. Another man told me to use less Scripture and tell more jokes.
3. A former elder told me that no one can grow spiritually listening to me.
4. His son-in-law wanted to hear grace and nothing else.
 - a) To whom else can I direct you than

- (1) to the God who created us, and
- (2) to His only communication He delivered, the Bible,

32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20.32).

- b) I plan on spending eternity in heaven with you my friends.
 - (1) That will only happen,
 - (2) if I commend you to God and to the word of His grace.

III. Look at the friendship of David and Jonathan again.

A. After David killed Goliath,

1. David and Jonathan became best friends,

1 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt (1Sa 18.1-4).

B. After the Philistines killed Jonathan,

1. David lamented his friend's life,

26 "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
Your love to me was wonderful,
Surpassing the love of women."
(2Sa 1.26).

C. After David became king,

1. he did not forget the family of his friend,

1 Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul,

that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2Sa 9.1).

Persuasion:

I. Do I Have Such a Friend as Jonathan?

A. Our friends will either

1. strengthen our hand in God, or
2. weaken our hand in God.

26 The righteous should choose his friends carefully,
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.
(Pro 12.26, NKJV)

26 A righteous man is cautious in friendship,
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
(Pro 12.26, NIV)

B. Do my friends strengthen my hand in God? Have I applied Pro 12.26?

1. Do they encourage me to do right?
2. Do they rebuke me when necessary?
3. Do they set the right example before me?

II. Am I Such a Friend as Jonathan?

A. Have I strengthened the hand of my friend in God?

1. Is there someone who is faithful now because I encouraged him?
2. Have I helped a friend through a great trial?

B. Friends are forever,

17a A friend loves at all times...
(Pro 17.17a)

"An open foe may prove a curse, but a pretended friend is worse."

1. If I were some other person,

2. would I want to be a friend of mine?

C. What you say to your friends will influence their lives,

23 A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!
(Pro 15.23)

25 Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But a good word makes it glad.
(Pro 12.25)

1. I became very discouraged during my first work, and
2. I thought about quitting preaching, but then
 - a) some friends of mine spoke the right words to me,
 - b) encouraging me and I came out of my depression.

D. Who needs your friendship?

1. Go do what a friend would do.
2. Do not worry about
 - a) what to do or
 - b) what to say.
 - (1) Your love for your friend
 - (2) will move you to say and to do the right thing.

Exhortation:

I. John 15 has the greatest declaration on friendship anywhere,

13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15.13–15).

A. Nothing compares to friendship with Jesus.

1. When you make Him your friend
2. you learn how to be a friend.

B. Watch Him interact with all kinds of people,

19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children" (Matt 11.19).

1. He accepted us as friends,
2. although none of us compares to what He is.

II. I discovered

- A. that Jesus wanted me for His friend, and
- B. when I became His friend,
 1. He became my friend, and
 2. added me to the great brotherhood of friends
 - a) known as the Kingdom of Heaven, or
 - b) as we more commonly call it, the church.

III. The church is a brotherhood of friends.

- A. We are family, but
- B. we are also friends.
 1. Use us for what you need, and
 2. give us what we need.