**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Do You Have a Friend in Jesus? Part 1**

You may have seen on a billboard or on some other sign, “You Have a Friend in Jesus.” That is indeed comforting statement and for sure if you have a friend in Jesus you have a friend in God, don’t you? Jesus is the Son of God. Today I want to contrast our earthly friends with having a friend in Jesus. Now, I don’t mean to minimize the importance of earthly friends. What would it be like if we didn’t have a friend to come and weep with us when we weep, to pick us up and encourage us when we are discouraged? Earthly friends are wonderful. But having a heavenly friend, God, Jesus our Lord is far greater than any earthly friend can possibly be. Let’s talk about that.

First of all, our earthly friends are limited in time and distance. For example, I have a friend here who needs me, but there is a more urgent need with a friend over there. I spend time with the friend who has the more urgent need, and may end up apologizing to the other friend because I couldn’t be with him when he had a need. We can’t be at two places at one time, we sometimes say. And so earthly friends are limited. But God is not so limited. God is not limited by time and distance. Hebrews 13:5 says, *“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”* God is always there. Several times in Scripture God promised certain ones, “I will be with you.” He said it to Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jeremiah, the apostles. Jesus said to the apostles, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*  (Matt. 28:20). It is wonderful to know that we have One who is always with us, and there is no time, there is no distance that prevents that. He will be with us.

Secondly, earthly friends don’t always listen so well. It’s not that they don’t want to. We have all at times found ourselves talking to a friend about something that was of considerable importance to us, but it was obvious that our friend was somewhat distracted. Or maybe the friend was in a hurry and was needing to go, and it made us uncomfortable because we didn’t feel like we were really communicating with that friend. Sometimes earthly friends don’t always listen so well. But that is not true of God. He always listens. 1 Peter 3:12 says, *“For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers…”*  Here is a mother whose child is sick. She may sleep some that night, but all the time she is sleeping her ear is listening for the least little whimper of her child. That is a picture of how God is toward His children. He is always listening for their prayers. He always hears.

In 1 Kings 18 we read of when Elijah, the prophet of God challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal were to prepare a bull for an offering, put it on the wood, but they were to put no fire under it. They were to call upon Baal, their god to bring fire. Elijah was to do the same, but he was to call upon Jehovah God to bring the fire. Elijah said, “the God who answers by fire, He is God.” The people agreed. The prophets of Baal went first, and they began to call on the name of Baal to bring fire, but there was no response. No fire came. They called from morning even till noon. It says in verse 27, *“And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, ‘Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.’”* I am thankful that we don’t serve a God that might be sleeping, or is away on a journey, or is too busy when we cry out to Him. That may be true of an earthly friend, but not true of the God of heaven. Psalm 121:3-4 says, *“He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.”* God does not slumber or sleep. God is always awake. He is always listening.

And He never gets tired of our coming. Daddies and Mothers, do you ever get tired of your children coming again and again and again interrupting what you are doing? Not our God. If we come to Him a hundred times in a day, He never tires of our coming.

Thirdly, sometimes earthly friends change, and some may even forsake us. Paul knew about that. In 2 Tim. 4:10, Paul said, *“Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica…”* It seems from other passages that Demas had been a fellow laborer with Paul. But now he forsakes him. Can you imagine how that hurt Paul? David knew about it. Look with me in Psalms 55:12-14. David says, *“For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, And walked to the house of God in the throng.”* David is probably referring to Ahithophel who had been David’s friend, but now had joined Absalom who was taking the kingdom away from David. You can feel the hurt when David says, “But it was you, a man my equal, my companion…” David says in Psalm 41:9, probably also referring to Ahithophel, *“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.”* That is the way it is sometimes with earthly friends.

But in our God we have a friend who does not forsake. Now, look with me In 2 Chron. 15:2. This is a message sent to Asa, the king of Judah from God, *“Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.”* Do you have Jesus as a friend? If there is any forsaking that will be done it will not be our Lord. It will be you. If you forsake Him, He will forsake you. But as long as you are faithful to Him, as long as you are a friend to Him, He will never, never forsake you.

Fourthly, Jesus did for us what no earthly friend could have done. He died for our sins. That is the reason He partook of flesh and blood, to be *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29) Jesus came *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10). Jesus said, *“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* (Matt. 20:28) Jesus came to do what no earthly friend could do, to die, to pay the price for our sins, so we can be saved from sin.

Now, are earthly friends important? Yes, indeed. I am glad I have earthly friends who encourage me and admonish me, and help me. But there is no earthly friendship that is comparable to that of having a friend in Jesus. Do you have a friend in Jesus? But who are the ones who are the friends of Jesus?

Look with me in John 15:13-14. Jesus says, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”* As we have already mentioned Jesus laid down His life for His friends. But who are His friends. Who has a friend in Jesus? Jesus says, *“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”* Sometimes I think we get the idea that Jesus is everybody’s friend. You can live any way you want to. You can take His name vain, show all kinds of disrespect to it, you can ignore His word and live an ungodly life, but if a crisis comes in your life, you can call upon Jesus because He is your friend. That is not what Jesus is saying here. He gives a condition if we are to be His friend. He says, *“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”*

This suggest, first of all, if I want Jesus as my friend I must accept an authoritarian religion. Isn’t that what Jesus says - *“You are My friends if you do whatever* ***I*** *command you”*? I know we would like to have a religion where we could go through the Bible and pick and choose what we like and then discard the rest. That might be nice in some ways, but that is not how we have Jesus as a friend. If you want to have Jesus as your friend you must obey whatever **He** commands you.

He is Lord. Peter said, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* (Acts 2:36) You’ve heard the phrase “Jesus is Lord.” You’ve seen it written on billboards, bumper stickers, and other signs. But do we really know what it means? Lord means Ruler. It means Jesus is Ruler, He has all authority. If Jesus is Lord then whatever He says goes. And if He is going to be my friend I must recognize Him as Lord, and I must submit to Him in **everything** that He commands. There is no room for my own think-soes, for my own subjective thinking as I read His word. I don’t interject my own thoughts and ideas about whether I like or dislike what He says, I just submit, because He is Lord. That’s what it means to have a friend in Jesus.

And so in Acts 2 Peter says to the Jews, “*let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* Verses 37 says, *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* Understanding that Jesus is Lord and Christ, they are now ready to do whatever He commands – “what shall we do?” Peter responds to their question by saying, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* There are two things they are told to do here – they are told to repent, and each of them be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Repent means to change your mind. Before now, you rejected Jesus, you did not believe in Him, you did not submit to Him as Lord, but now repent, change your mind, determine to obey Him in all things. And they are told to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is an immersion in water. They are told to do these two things “for the remission of sins.” In order for them to have the remission or forgiveness of sin they must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Verse 41 says, *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”*

Dear listener, do you have a friend in Jesus? No everyone does. It is only those who receive His word and obey Him. Why not be a friend to Jesus today.

Our time is gone for today. We thank you for listening.

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