

The Love

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Preacher: Cory Brock

- [0 : 0 0] Well, we're continuing our series in the book of John tonight on the farewell speeches of Christ, the King's Speech as we've titled it, from John 13 to John 17.
- And we'll be in the passage we just read, John 15, 12 to 17. If you looked at all in the bulletin this morning, the title that was given was The Love, and I gave that title, but it's not the right title.
- It should be the Friendship, this passage about friendship. It's about love, but it's about more, it's about friendship. This passage is about a theology of friendship with God.
- And you see that, if you look at verse 15, I no longer call you slaves or servants, but I call you friends. I've called you friends. This passage is about a theology of friendship.
- In my other capacity, besides preaching and teaching here at St. C's, I'm a student and I'm a PhD student in theology, and so it's my job to just read a bunch of theology books from time to time.
- [1 : 0 2] And sometimes that's a good thing, sometimes it's not. And I was interested, I went into, I read mostly in modern theology and post 18th century and beyond up to the present.
- And I was reading across different modern theology books this week, looking for friendship with God, a theology of friendship with God. And I was surprised to see that almost no what we call systematic theologians talk about a theology of friendship with God as a category in any of the modern theology books.
- And then I went back and I did, I have this program on my computer where I can search theology across books across time. And I went and I looked at the early church, the church right after Jesus for about the first four or 500 years.
- And I typed in a theology of friendship with God and references everywhere, references all over the place. One of the earliest ones was in the year 200, a guy named Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, wrote this about Adam, about Adam and Eve.
- Innocent he was Adam, and an intimate friendship with God as the husband men of paradise. Husband means like farmer. Innocent he was an intimate friendship with God in paradise.
- [2 : 1 1] Tertullian knew what Genesis one and two was about. He understood that there's a relationship going on in Genesis one to two where Adam and Eve are their friends with God, their friends with God.
- In Genesis three after they've sinned it says that in three, eight that God came down and walked in the garden. And anytime you see the verb walking in the Old Testament and Paul even uses it the same way in Ephesians, walking is about friendship.
- Men in the Old Testament they walk together. And Adam and Eve they walked with God. You know, CS Lewis, kind of the famous quote about friendship, CS Lewis says, friendship is born at the moment when one man, one woman says to another, what?
- You too? I thought I was the only one. Now what's he mean by that? He means that friendship is born when people walk side by side. They walk shoulder to shoulder in a specific direction looking at the same thing, having the same goal.

There's something that they're pursuing together. Friendship develops. They walk and Adam and Eve walked with God. They were friends. They were friends. And Tertullian knew that and the early church talked about it a lot.

[3 : 25] And I think maybe one of the reasons that we don't talk about friendship with God much in the modern era is because our culture doesn't love friendship like it used to love friendship.

You know, what's the modern idea of friendship? What's the principal location where you get your modern idea of friendship? You know it. It's Facebook.

You can have 5,000 friends on Facebook. That's the modern way. What's the ancient way of friendship? Listen to Proverbs 18, a man of too many friends comes to ruin.

But a friend, a true friend sticks closer than a brother. The ancient way is you've got one or two. The new way is you've got 5,000. You've got 10,000. You've got 100,000.

The ancient way of friendship is recorded friendship all over the place. The ancient way made great records of friendship. David and Jonathan. Oh, the saga of David and Jonathan.

[4 : 24] It's a beautiful tele-friendship. Look, the wisdom literature in the Old Testament, Proverbs, Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, friendship references all over the place.

In some ways the book of Proverbs is a book written to boys to learn about who to be friends with and who to marry. That's what the book of Proverbs is about. What's the modern way?

What's the modern relationship that we love so much? If you go to the local newsstand, if you go to Boots and look over to your right before you check out and see what's on the front cover of the magazines, do you ever see, check out the latest hot friendship that's buzzing in Hollywood.

No, the magazines don't promote, look at this new friendship. So and so are friends. It's amazing. No, it's romance. It's a relationship of romance. We love the relationship of romance in the 20th and 21st century, but friendship, oh, friendship.

Friendship, friendship's slow, it's long. True friendship lasts forever, but romance, it comes and goes. We love romance. We love movement. We don't love friendship, our culture doesn't.

[5 : 32] Look, this passage is saying this, friendship has been at the center of God's work for all of history and it's got to be at the center of your life.

It's got to be at the center of your life. So I want to just unfold the passage by asking two questions. First, what's a friend? What's a friend?

Simply, and second, how do we do friendship with God? What's a friend and how do we do friendship with God? So first, what's a friend? Now, you might have, if you've been around this series at all for any length of time, you might have noticed something that there's an immense amount of repetition in this passage.

You know, we've been saying this. You can't, when you preach the book of John and when you preach John 13 to 17, you just have to pick and choose. I mean, you just can't touch on everything and we can't do that.

We can't touch on everything tonight in this passage. We have to pick and choose. But one of the beautiful things is that John 13 to 17 is very repetitive. So if you look down at verse 12 at the very beginning, this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.

[6 : 35] Now, we've preached two sermons on the exact same text already in the series. Love one another as I have loved you, the new commandment of Jesus. I've preached an entire sermon on that not very long ago.

There's two other things that are repeated in this passage in verse 16 that you might bear fruit. You preached a whole sermon last Sunday on bearing fruit. And then the third one is ask anything and it will be given to you in verse 16.

And Tom preached a sermon on that not long ago. So what I'm going to do tonight is I'm just going to preach an old sermon because you've forgotten it already and I can get away with it. No, I'm just kidding. I read a new sermon, but I could have gotten away with it, I think.

The farewell speeches are very repetitive. Why? Because Jesus is teaching the same things over and over again in different ways.

He's repeating the same conclusions, but he's doing it through different images. Okay, so he's done the images of going home.

[7 : 38] Last week we did the image of the fruit and the vine, of the branches. He's done the relationship of father to his children, of brother to sister. And now we've come to a new relationship, a new way of describing the conclusions he wants us to get to and that's through friendship.

It's a new way of seeing the same conclusions that he's already drawn. And what is it that he's trying to emphasize? What is it that he's trying to say every week? What's it that he's trying to tell the disciples?

He's trying to tell them this. He's trying to explain to them what he's about to do on the cross. He's trying to help them understand what it is that the cross is about.

That's the first thing and the second thing he's trying to get them to see, what are they supposed to do when he goes to the cross? What's the cross about and what are you supposed to do when I go to the cross? That's what he's been getting at the whole time and the answers verse 12.

This is the third time he said it, that you might love one another as I have loved you. You might love one another as in other words, the answer to both those questions, you'll remember the word from a few sermons ago is agape.

[8 : 44] Now you'll remember that there are at least seven different words in the New Testament for love and we don't have that in English unfortunately.

Some other languages do but we don't and the word that you see constantly from John 13 to 17 is agape but there's other words for love. There's philos which is the love of affection, of friendship usually is what it refers to.

There's eros, the love of lovers, the love of romance, the love of husband and wife for each other. There's storgy which is the love of, it's hard to, storgy is hard to get to but it's the love of the homeland.

It's got a nationalistic sense to it. It's the love of your old blanket when you're a toddler. It's the love of leather bound books and a beautiful library.

That's storgy. There's three or four more at least in the New Testament. Now he's talking about friendship, I no longer call you servants but friends.

[9 : 47] Greater love has no man than this that he laid down his life for his friends but the word that he chooses to use is not the love of friends, it's not philos. He does use it throughout the Gospels from time to time but the word that he chooses to use here is agape.

The word he chooses here is agape. Now the question is why? He's talked about his friendship, he talked about his friendship to Lazarus with the verb phileo, the love of friends, he talked about it with zakius.

He said that he has philos for zakius. He's used it before but here when he's trying to explain the point of the cross and what his disciples are to do when he leaves he uses agape.

Look, I think the point is this, there's all types of friendships. The way we use the word friendship today, you have friendship with your neighbor that you speak to once a month, you have friendship with your boss, you have friendship with your coworkers, there's all sorts of ways of friendship but there's a different type of friendship.

There's a friendship that transcends all types of relationships. There's all types of relationships at their best when they reach the point of agape, true love, become friendships, become friendships.

[11 : 06] The best relationships are always friendships. How do you have a happy marriage? It's not eros.

If you've been married for any time, you know eros isn't how you have a great marriage. It's friendship. It's true friendship. You want to be a friendship with your spouse, you want to have a great relationship with your best friends.

But true agape expresses itself in the relation of being friends. We can learn more about this from asking this question.

What is the Bible said about friendship up till this point? The main place you can go to learn that is to go back to the proverbs. Proverbs talks about friendship all over the place.

Jesus is talking about friendship here. He's fulfilling the proverbs. Listen to this. Three things here. Three things from the proverbs.

[12 : 03] Proverbs 26, many a man professes loyalty, but who can find a loyal friend? Many a man professes loyalty, but who can find a loyal friend?

What's Solomon or the author of the proverbs saying there? Simply this, that you need friends. Many a man professes loyalty, but who can find a loyal friend?

C.S. Lewis in the treatise he wrote about friendship, about the love of friendship, says this, has this really famous quote that you might have heard before. He says this, friendship is unnecessary like philosophy or art.

It has no survival value. Now, what's he mean by that? You know what he means. We're all busy. We're all busy 21st century people. Look, we have survival relationships.

What's a survival relationship? It's the relationship you have to have. It's the relationship, if we want to keep producing humans in this world, we got to have husbands and wives.

[13 : 05] If we want to keep producing humans in this world, we got to have mothers and fathers. You can't not be a brother or sister. You can't not be an employee of an employer.

You have to be. If you want to survive in this world, these are survival relationships. You have to have these. You see what Lou is saying? Friendship isn't necessary. It's like philosophy. It's like art.

He says it has no survival value. Rather, it's one of those things that gives value to survival. You see, it's built into the fabric of relationships since creation.

It's the epitome. Who can find a loyal friend as the prophet? You need it. It's not a survival relationship, but it's relationships that gives value to survival.

It's the ultimate expression. It's the end goal of all relationships. That's the first thing. The second thing that you learn from the Proverbs about friendship is this. Proverbs 17, 17, a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.

[14 : 10] A friend loves at all times, but a brother is born for adversity. You see what the author is saying there? A brother has to be a brother in times of adversity.

If you've got a brother and things get hard in your life, your brother's got to come be there for you or your sister. A brother's born for adversity, but a friend, oh, a friend.

A friend loves at all times. You see? What's the difference? What's the difference? Friendship is thicker than blood. Friendship's thicker than blood.

Friendship is what makes true family. Jesus Christ, who is my mother? Who are my brothers and my sisters? You see what he's saying?

Friendship is thicker than blood. He's talking about friendship. He's talking about his disciples as his friends. Jonathan loved David as his own soul more than his father.

[15 : 06] Great relationships are friendships. It's thicker than blood. Thirdly and finally, Proverbs 27, 17, famous verse. You guys probably know it.

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. But how? But how? Well, if you go on reading in the same passage in Proverbs 27, blessed are the wounds of a friend, but the kiss of an enemy is deceitful.

Blessed are the wounds of a friend, but the kiss of an enemy is deceitful. What's he saying? True friendship is so intimate.

True friendship is such a fellowship that true friendship expresses itself in telling the truth in love. Blessed are the wounds of a friend. Blessed is the friend who will cut you in just the right places, who will tell you exactly who you are.

And you know what that takes? It takes truly knowing someone. It's the type of thing that can only express itself in time. The kiss of an enemy, that's deceit.

[16 : 15] Oh, the kiss of Judas. But the stabbing wound of a friend, this is blessing. This is blessing. It's intimate knowledge.

It's in it for the long call with surgical precision. It's love enough to tell the truth. Look, let's summarize it in a phrase. True friendship is a commitment to loving someone else all the way to the point of a great cost, a great cost.

That's why they must be few in number. They must be scheduled. Effort must be made. Blows must be struck. Cost must be paid, and that's a God-paid friendship.

That's a God-paid friendship. Do you have one? Do you have one? Do you have a friend like this?

Are any of the 3,000 on the social media page, one of these, they're knit with your soul.

[17 : 18] They don't just like you. They love you. A brother doesn't have to like you. He still has got to be there for you, but a friend likes you. A friend loves you. A brother doesn't have to.

He knows you enough to strike ruins that bleed joy. The answer that I suspect for us is probably not. Probably not. This is the Bible's description of good friendship.

Back to John 15. Jesus is summarizing and fulfilling all the expectations of friendship from the Proverbs in this passage.

The way he describes all of them encapsulated into a single phrase is found in verse 13. Greater agape has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Greater agape has no one than this than somebody lay down his life for their friends. That phrase, laying down one's life, we've taken that phrase over into English.

[18 : 17] If you think about it, it's a really weird idiom. It's an idiom in Greek and it's very strange. It literally says something more like to put something down on the ground for another or something like that.

It's really strange, right? But we've adopted it into English and we know exactly what it means. You know exactly what it means. The Susan are reading. Laying down one's life, it means to go to death. It means to go to death for them.

Now when Jesus says this, this is not random. This is the end of a conversation.

It's the end of a conversation. Back in chapter 13, Simon Peter, right after the Lord's Supper, right after the Last Supper, said to Jesus, Lord, where are you going?

In other words, explain to me the cross. The whole point of John 13 to 17, what's this about? You're telling me that you're leaving us. Explain to me the cross. And Jesus answered him, where I'm going, you can't come.

[19 : 17] You can't come. You can't follow me. And then he said, but you will follow me afterwards. And Peter says to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? Here it is, here it is. I will lay down my life for you.

It's the same exact phrase as the one Jesus is just telling us. Greater love has no end than this, than they lay down their life for a friend. And Peter's told him, look, where are you going? I'll come with you. I'll lay down my life for you.

I will. In other words, what's he saying? I'm your friend. Peter to Jesus, I'm your friend. And you know the response.

Jesus answered, will you lay down your life for me? Will you? Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I said to you, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

What's Peter offering to Jesus here? He's offering friendship. He's saying, Jesus, my love is to the point of agape friendship.

[20 : 20] I will lay down my life for you. I am knit with your soul. I don't just like you. I love you. It's thicker than blood between us.

I know you enough to strike wounds that bleed. He's saying, Peter's saying, I am with proverbs. Let's talk about it. I am an agape friend. I will lay down my life for you.

And what is it that Peter shows us? You see, what he tells us is not what he shows us. He tells us he'll lay down his life for Jesus. He shows us.

He shows us why we don't have friendship like this, like the proverbs. You know, we read about the ideal friend.

The Book of Proverbs gives us a picture of the ideal friend. Do we have this? And we ask ourselves, do we have this? And we say, why is no one like this to me? Why is no one like this? Why is no one doing this for me?

[21 : 16] Why don't I have a Jonathan as a person that my soul is knit to? I need it. The Proverbs says that the true wisdom says I need this. Why don't I have it?

And here's the answer. Peter's giving us the answer because we aren't it. You see? Because you don't have one because you're not one.

Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, came into the world He made. He came to His own, and His own people did not know Him. They were not His friends.

He came with the human nature, looking and needing friendship. Peter promises friendship and He gives them treason. He gives them betrayal.

Verse 13 is not isolated. It's the end of a conversation. It's the explanation of true friendship. And it's the explanation of the cross at the very same time.

[22 : 10] Look, here's the point. Here's the point. The cross is true friendship manifest before our eyes. The cross is true friendship manifest before our eyes.

Is there anything that breaks friendships in your life like betrayal? Is there any other great breaker of a friendship than betraying?

Jesus knows Peter's going to betray Him. You see? He's already told him. The cross is the great declaration of friendship to traitors.

One man might die for a true friend. David might die for Jonathan. Their souls are in it together. Jonathan might die for David, but oh, to be a friend of traitors.

Who are we in all of this? You see? The book of John's already told us. The son of man came eating and drinking, and they said, look at him, a glutton and a drunkard and a friend of who?

[23 : 23] A friend of who? He came to be the friend of the tax collector and the sinner, Matthew 11:19. And when they saw he went home with Zacchaeus, they all grumbled, he's gone to be the friend of a man who is a sinner.

One theologian puts it well. He puts the whole picture. The whole cosmic picture into the perspective of friendship with God, and this is what he says. The world is not itself capable of reconciliation with God.

Man cannot convert himself. He cannot make himself the friend of God instead of the enemy of God. He cannot save himself from the destruction which must inevitably follow his war against God.

He cannot do anything to escape the wrath of God which threatens him and the position in which he has placed himself. He cannot alter the fact that this position is a place of shadows and that from this place he enters irresistibly on a slope which leads to outer darkness.

But in the relationship of Jesus, the man is the friend of God and is no longer his enemy. Agape friendship, agape friendship goes all the way to death so that friends who are criminals, sinners, and traitors can have the gift of life.

[24 : 43] There's the biblical friendship. Secondly, how do we seek, find, cultivate friendship with God, secondly and lastly?

How do we do friendship with God then? How do we do this? Well, there's tons of answers to that question. We could go to a number of passages. All I want to do briefly is draw three lessons from this text about cultivating friendship with God or thinking about friendship with God.

The first one is a little bit unusual. It's a lesson about theology or it's a lesson for theologians.

Every once in a while we need to talk to the people who really are the theologians of the room because many of us come from the Reformed tradition and fancy ourselves to be loving things like theology and thinking about things like theology all the time and really focused on knowing as much as we possibly can about the scriptures and about what we call systematic theology or whatever else and putting it all together into a system and thinking about as much as possible.

But here's the first lesson. Here's the first lesson. The doctrine of election that God chooses his church. The doctrine of election is a theological category that signifies friendship.

[26 : 04] Signifies friendship. Did you catch it in verse 16? Look at verse 16 with me. You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you.

You did not choose me but I chose you. There it is. Right? So any good theology lesson we'll get up and we'll talk about election right now. What's election? Election is God choosing us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians chapter 1 predestinating us to a specific end to be in Christ forever. And that's all true. That's true. But look, they've just eaten their supper.

They've just eaten their dinner. They've just broken bread. They're sitting. They've sat around the table with friends and now they're taking a walk to a garden. And in the context of this passage when Jesus says, I have chosen you, what are the disciples here?

What are they here? Oh, he's talking about election. He's talking about systematic theology right now. Take out your notepad.

[27 : 15] Predestination. We need to jot this down for the sake of constructing our systems. What's he saying in the context? I chose you to be my friend is what he's saying.

He's just told them greater love has no one than this than that he laid down his life for his friends. He's going to the cross. He's on his way to the garden. It's not about systematic theology.

Here's the point. Constructing systems of theology is very good. I do it full time. That's my full time job. I love it.

But the Bible is not for building systems of theology. It's for friendship with God.

And the systems that we build are for friendship with God. And if you get those two things confused, then your heart will be very cold and very hard.

[28 : 16] You know what he's saying here? When he talks about election as friendship, I want you. I want you. I chose you.

It's thicker than blood. It's so much thicker than blood that it's resurrection.

He likes you to put it crudely. If you're one of his, he likes you. Secondly, we're going to talk about prayer.

Prayer is a prayer to a friend. Prayer in this passage is a prayer to a friend. So look with me back at verse 16. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.

But we've talked about this passage the same phrase a couple times already throughout John 13 to 17, and this is the third time that he's said it. He's already said before this, if you abide in me and my word abides and you ask anything you wish, and it will be done for you.

[29 : 30] Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I'll do it. Now this is one of the things that we call tough sayings, right?

It's when you read it on the surface of the text, what does it look like? It looks like Jesus is saying, ask anything you want. And my Father is going to give it to you. As long as you say it in my name, and what's the problem?

You know the problem. You've prayed prayers and you don't see it. You don't see you getting everything you want and everything you wish. There's a clear problem with that. Experience doesn't seem to match up with the text, what the text is saying all over the place.

What does he mean here? Again just like the idea of election, we have to put it into context. In the passages before this when he said it, he had situated it inside of a metaphor.

A metaphor that we are the branches and he is the vine. We are abiding in him. We are situated in him. How does a branch bear fruit? We talked about this last time.

[30 : 33] How does a branch bear fruit? The branch doesn't walk around with little legs sprouting some type of berry and shouting to the vines, pick me, graft me into yourself.

I'm fruitful. I'm a good one, right? How does a branch bear fruit? It gets life from the vine. It's completely free grace. It comes directly from the vine.

And what kind of a fruit does the branch bear? The fruit that the vine is supposed to produce.

You don't go find oranges on an apple tree, right? Because fruit is born of the type of vine that it is. You see what he's saying? You see what he's saying?

If you abide in me, if you abide in me, if you're a branch connected to the vine, getting life from the vine, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you.

[31 : 32] What does a branch connected to the vine wish for? It wishes for what the vine wishes for, you see? In other words, the assumption here is that you're already fruit bearing.

You're already fruit bearing. Ask anything you want. Anything you want. Whatever you wish. What's he saying? What's the point? His point is this. Prayers are heard and answered when our will, the things that we want, map onto the things that God wants because our will is being shaped by the vine.

It's not anything you wish as a fruit bearing branch, as a friend who eats dinner with Jesus, who sits down and walks with him side by side, who's walking with him shoulder to shoulder.

You can ask anything you want because your will is conformed to wish what God wishes. How do you get that?

How do you get that? You have to seek it. Friendship is cultivated. It's cultivated. It's effort must be put in.

[32 : 45] Effort must be put in. It's all, you're attached to the vine at a total free grace, but the conformation of your will to his will, you have to search and seek to find.

All right, thirdly and finally, last thing is this. The last thing and the most beautiful thing, I think. Pursuing friendship with God. How do you pursue friendship with God finally?

Come with me to verse 15. No longer do I call you servants. No longer do you call you servants. For the servant doesn't know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends.

Now, we've already said that in the Old Testament, one of the primary expressions for friendship is through the verb walking. Adam and Eve walked with God, Psalm 1, you walk in the counsel of the wicked or the righteous.

You walk with friends and you become like them or you don't. Now, in the New Testament, there's another primary way that friendship becomes expressed.

[33 : 48] Another primary way, and you can find it in Revelation, you can find it all over the book of John, but also in Revelation, at the end of Revelation, or sorry, Revelation 3. What is Jesus, this is Jesus speaking, Revelation 3.

Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in with him and I will eat with him and he with me.

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne. He's standing at the door and he's knocking in this passage and he says, if you will answer the door and let me in, I will come and I will eat with you.

What is friendship with God? The primary expression in the New Testament for friendship with God is always table fellowship. It's always table fellowship.

It's always eating a meal. It's always eating meal. Just a couple examples of this briefly. Theologian Alexander Hodge at Princeton writes this about the offerings in the Old Testament.

[35 : 02] Listen to this. In the case of a peace offering in Leviticus, the characteristic feature was that after the sin had been confessed, imposed in atonement for, the fat and the rich portions of the sacrifice, the good meat, was burned up on the altar and given to Yahweh, given to God.

While the offer and his friends feasted upon what remained. This was the symbol of establishing friendship with God from the very code of Leviticus and near communion with him and the blessings of his kingdom.

It's all the way back into Leviticus. The primary expression of friendship with God is table fellowship. Second example, it's no coincidence that the very first sign of Jesus Christ is the wedding at Cana.

The wedding at Cana. In that passage, the master of ceremonies that runs the banquet, the ones that were so surprised about the wine, who comes in and says, wow, you saved the best wine until last to the bridegroom.

You know what his name literally translates to? The Lord of the Feast. The Lord of the Feast. You see what's happening in that passage? In that miracle? The master of ceremonies didn't provide, he wasn't the Lord of the Feast.

[36 : 12] Jesus was the Lord of the Feast. He's the one that, Jesus comes to his friend's wedding. You have to be invited and he becomes the Lord of the Feast. How does he express friendship?

He eats and he provides the wine. He's the Lord of the Feast at Cana and it's no coincidence that he becomes the Lord of the Feast at the Last Supper.

Just moments before this very incident. It's no coincidence that the great trader, Peter, dines with Jesus in the very last chapter of this book on the beach.

He gives, what does Jesus do in his very last moment? He breaks bread with Peter and gives him breakfast and he asks him the same question again, do you love me? Do you agape me? Am I your friend?

You see, here's the point. The Christian life is mundane at times and it's hard and it requires that you cultivate a Christian imagination for the Lord of the Feast.

[37 : 17] What's a Christian imagination? It's not pure fantasy, fantasizing. A Christian imagination is letting your mind and the way you image the future, what's coming for you, the joy that's set before you.

It's the way you image it throughout your life. It's the way you think about it. Do you see, look, here's the simple. Do you see Jesus as the Lord of the Feast? Is he your friend?

Is he your friend? Is he more than just your savior? Being your savior is a means to a bigger end and the bigger end is friendship.

You see, it's feasting with God, Revelation 19. It's the marriage supper of the Lamb. Is he more than your savior? Is he your friend?

Some of us need to break out of being bored to death with Scripture, prayer and worship by having our imaginations cultivated by the Lord of the Feast. The greatest moments of your life, what are the greatest moments of your life?

[38 : 17] Are the great feasts of your life with good friends. Why? The reason that great feasts with friends make you happy is not that communion with God is like having a great feast with a true friend, but that having a great feast with a true friend in this life is a pointer to true communion with God.

Communion with God as a feast came before good table fellowship in this life. Good table fellowship in this life is about pointing us to great table fellowship with the friend of friends in the Eschaton in the final days.

Go out and have a good meal tonight and imagine the Lord of the Feast. Let's pray. Thank you God for being our friend, for coming in Jesus while we were enemies and making us friends.

We ask that you cultivate in us an imagination of feast with Jesus. We ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen.