

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 15.9-17



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 15.9-17
Copyright 2017 T. M. and Susie Moore
Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series IV a and b: John, edited by Joel C. Elowsky, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006. Verse translation of John by T. M. Moore.

Introduction to *John 15.9-17*

Jesus calls His disciples “friends.” Imagine!

What does it mean to be a friend of Jesus? What does friendship with Jesus entail? What is He expecting? How can we fulfill His expectations?

These questions should exercise the mind of every believer, every day. There can be no higher calling in life than to be a friend of Jesus, but the challenges of friendship are many. Jesus has chosen us as friends, and appointed us to bear fruit. He commands us to love one another, and thus to prove our friendship.

What a glorious privilege and calling.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfjell*.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Law and Love

Read and meditate on John 15.9, 10.

Jesus made no separation between the love of God and the Law of God. The Law of God comes from the love of God, and shows us how to love God and our neighbors as He does. We cannot love, or abide in Jesus' love, without keeping the commandments of God.

⁹“In my love abide, for I have loved you as the Father loves Me. ¹⁰So if you keep My commandments, you will know you are abiding in My love, as I have kept My Father’s Word, and so abide in His.”

- John 15.9, 10

Reflect

1. A tendency exists in some Christian circles today to downplay or even avoid the Law of God. The claim is, “We’re not under Law, we’re under grace.” Mention keeping the Law in some Christian circles, and you’ll be labeled a Pharisee, or a promoter of salvation by works. But here we find Jesus insisting on both. Let’s back up a bit and see if we can get a right understanding of the Law. Look at Leviticus 18.1-5. How did God envision the Law? What was His purpose in giving it? Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, when I think about the Law of God, I...*

2. We know that Israel was unable to keep the Law, and so enjoy fullness of life as God intended. But even in Moses’ lifetime, God pointed forward to a day when His people would keep His Law, after He had done a new work in their hearts. Look at Deuteronomy 30.1-10, then Ezekiel 36.26, 27. When would God’s people finally keep His Law and know fullness of life as He intends? Jesus promised the Spirit as our Helper. What does He help us to do? *Lord, let Your Spirit be powerfully at work within me, to make me willing and able to...*

3. Jesus came announcing the Kingdom of God, a realm of grace and truth that would bring righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit to the world. How did He expect the citizens of His Kingdom to conduct themselves? In your answer, meditate on Matthew 5.17-19 and 1 John 2.1-6. *Lord, I know that I can only realize my calling to Your Kingdom and glory as I...*

4. Meditate on Matthew 22.34-40. How did Jesus summarize the purpose of the Law and the prophets? What did Solomon warn concerning those who neglect the Law of God, according to Proverbs 28.4, 9? How did Paul regard the Law (Rom. 7.7, 12; Rom. 3.21)? And what about James (Jms. 2.8-12)? *Lord, I want my attitude toward the Law, and my practice of keeping Your commandments to be the same as...*

5. Now we’re ready to consider Jesus’ words in our text for today. How did Jesus understand the relationship between the love of God, the commandments (Law) of God, and the love we are to bear for one another? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Now, if observing the commandments is the essential sign of love, it is very greatly feared that without love even the most effective action of the glorious gifts of grace—even of the most sublime powers and even of faith itself and the commandment that make a person perfect—will not be of help.... It is evident, therefore,

and undeniable that without charity—even though ordinances are obeyed and righteous acts are performed, even though the commandments of the Lord have been observed and great wonders of grace effected—they will be considered as works of iniquity ... because those who perform these acts have as their aim the gratification of their own will.” *Basil the Great (330-379 AD)*

Meditate on Psalm 1. How should a follower of Christ practice what David recommends here?

Closing Prayer

Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 (*St. Thomas: I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*)

How blessed are they that shun sin's vain and wicked ways.
For them has Christ salvation won; He loves them all their days.

God's Word is their delight; they prosper in its truth.
In it they dwell both day and night to flourish and bear fruit.

Firm planted on the banks of God's great stream of grace,
They raise unending praise and thanks to His great glorious face.

The wicked are not so, but, driven by the winds,
They fall and perish, weighed with woe, when once God's wrath begins.

In Jesus' righteousness, though sinners fail and fall,
His flock He will preserve and bless, who on His favor call.

2 For Joy

Read and meditate on John 15.11.

People think that happiness is the greatest good in life. It's not. Joy is. And Jesus has got the joy.

11 "These things I make known to you that My joy may always dwell in you, and that your joy may be complete."

- John 15.11

Reflect

1. Let's see if we can differentiate between *happiness* and *joy*. *Happiness*, as the word suggests, is dependent on *hap* or *circumstances*. Given the right *circumstances*, we will feel happy. Happiness is not a bad thing. Explain. But happiness is not *joy*. Happiness can be fleeting and elusive. Why? What about joy? Complete this prayer: *Lord, in Your presences is fullness of joy, and this makes me happy regardless of...*

2. *Joy* is a more permanent and powerful affection than happiness, because it does not depend on changeable or fleeting, *temporal* or *material* circumstances. Meditate on Habakkuk 3.17-19. Would the circumstances described here conduce to one's being *happy*? Why not? On the other hand, what is the source of the prophet's *joy*? Does that ever change? Why should we seek *joy* rather than *happiness*? How should we seek it? *Thank You, Lord, that I can know joy because...*

3. With this much as backdrop, let's look at Jesus' astonishing statement in John 15.11. Remember our discussion about *abiding* or *continuing*. Jesus wants His joy to *abide in us*! What is Jesus' joy? How strong is the joy Jesus knew (cf. Heb. 12.1, 2)? What makes His joy more to be desired than mere happiness? How does He want us to *experience* His joy? How do you expect that to happen in your life? *Lord, since it is possible for Your joy to abide in me...*

4. Jesus communicates His joy to us through His Word. How does that happen? How do the words of Jesus – which are all the words of Scripture – tap us into the joy of Jesus? How does understanding this counsel us to read Scripture? What should we be seeking as we read Scripture? How can we tap into the joy of Jesus in our time of reading His words, and how should this affect us throughout the rest of our day? *Lord, I don't always experience Your joy, but only because...*

5. Jesus wants our joy to be *full*. How do you feel when you feel *joyful*? How do you act? How does feeling joyful lead you to relate to others? What are the greatest hindrances to our knowing the joy of Jesus in all its fullness? How can we overcome these? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

"And what else is Christ's joy in us except that he is pleased to rejoice over us? And what is this joy of ours that he says is to be made full, but our having fellowship with him?... His joy, therefore, in us is the grace he has bestowed on us, and that is also our joy. But he rejoiced over this joy even from eternity when he chose us before the foundation of the world. Nor can we rightly say that his joy was not full. For God's joy was never at any time imperfect. But that joy of his was not in us. For we, in whom that joy could exist, had as yet no existence. And even when our existence commenced, it began not to be in him. But in him it always was, who in the infallible truth of his own foreknowledge rejoiced that we should yet be his own. Accordingly, he had a joy over us that was already full when he rejoiced in foreknowing and foreordaining us. And there could

hardly be any fear intermingling in that joy of his that might imply a possible failure in what he foreknew would be done by himself." *Augustine 354-430 AD*)

The Christian life is a life of joy. This does not mean that Christians never know disappointment, shame, sorrow, grief, or a sense of loss. It simply means that, in the midst of all these and more, Christians can know joy, because Jesus has got the joy, and He gives it to us by His words. Would you describe yourself as a bringer of joy to your world? Explain.

Closing Prayer

As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say to me,
"Where is your God?"
When I remember these things,
I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go with the multitude;
I went with them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.
Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.

Psalm 42.1-5

Psalm 42.1-5 (*Nettleton: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*)

As the deer pants for fresh water let my soul, Lord, pant for You!
Let my soul thirst as it ought to for the Savior, ever true!
Tears by day have been my portion, tears by night have been my food,
While my foes add to my sorrow, saying, "Where now is your God?"

Now I pour my soul out in me as these thoughts come to my mind.
And I long to once again be where true worship I might find.
Oh my soul, be not despairing! Hope in God, and praise His Name!
For the Lord, your burden bearing, will restore your peace again.

3 The Standard for Love

Read and meditate on John 15.12, 13.

Jesus sets the standard for what it means to love one another.

¹²“And this is My commandment: Love each other, just as I have loved you. ¹³There no greater love can be than this, that someone love so much that he would lay his life down for his friends.”

- John 15.12, 13

Reflect

1. The mark of Christian discipleship is the love believers bear for one another (Jn. 13.35). But unless we understand love, we shall not be able to realize our calling as followers of Christ. For some people, love is primarily a *feeling*, a positive affection inclining them favorably toward another person. Is it legitimate to think of love in this way? Explain. Is it *sufficient* to think of love in this way? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I know You call us to love You with all our heart, so love must entail some feeling; yet...*

2. Jesus set Himself as the example of what love requires: “as I have loved you.” Think back through our study of John’s gospel, and what you know about Jesus from other gospels. How did Jesus show that He loved His disciples? What can you point to as examples of how Jesus loved them? *Help me day by day, Lord, to see You loving Your disciples, so that I...*

3. Jesus made loving one another a commandment. He did not say, “This is what I want you to *feel*.” He said, “This is My commandment...” Commandments are to be, first, *understood*, then *obeyed*, whether or not the proper feeling is present. Should you show love, even if you don’t feel like it? Do you suppose that doing so might help to shape the proper affections in your heart? Explain. *Lord, make me ever ready to obey Your command, and help me to feel Your love for others as I...*

4. Meditate on Philippians 2.5-11. How many different ways did Jesus “lay down” His life for His “friends”? What might laying down your life for others require of you? What can you do to make sure you’ll be ready to lay down your life for your friends when the opportunity arises? *Give me grace, Lord, to deny myself and take up my cross daily, so that...*

5. What can prevent us from loving one another as Jesus commands? What are the greatest obstacles we need to overcome in being ready and willing to lay down our lives for our friends? How can believers help one another to overcome these? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“The unique, the highest proof of love is this, to love the person who is against us. This is why Truth himself bore the suffering of the cross and yet bestowed his love on his persecutors, saying, ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ Why should we wonder that his living disciples loved their enemies, when their dying master loved his? He expressed the depth of his love when he said, ‘No one has greater love than this, than that he lay down his life for his friends.’ The Lord had come to die even for his enemies, and yet he said he would lay down his life for his friends to show us that when we are able to win over our enemies by loving them, even our persecutors are our friends.” *Gregory the Great (540-604 AD)*

We are commanded to love, and the defining action of love is to set aside self-interest and look to the concerns and needs and cares of others. If we will *act* in love toward one another, looking to Jesus as our example, we will grow to *feel* love for one another, and thus become in mind, heart, conscience, and life, true followers of Jesus Christ. What will love require of you today?

Closing Prayer

Praise the LORD!

For *it is* good to sing praises to our God;

For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted

And binds up their wounds.

He counts the number of the stars;

He calls them all by name.

Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power;

His understanding is infinite.

The LORD lifts up the humble;

He casts the wicked down to the ground.

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;

Sing praises on the harp to our God,

Who covers the heavens with clouds,

Who prepares rain for the earth,

Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

He gives to the beast its food,

And to the young ravens that cry.

He does not delight in the strength of the horse;

He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,

In those who hope in His mercy.

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

Psalm 147.1-11

Psalm 147.1-11 (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!

With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.

The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;

His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.

He puts in man's strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

4 Friends of Jesus

Read and meditate on John 15:14.

Like a good many other words, *friends* must be understood in its Biblical, rather than its contemporary setting.

¹⁴“And you
are My friends if what I command, you do.”

- John 15:14

Reflect

1. Jesus called His disciples *friends*. As they were friends of Jesus, so we should aspire to be. But we need to understand this idea Biblically. Let's look at a few passages, to get God's perspective on what this term implies. Meditate on Exodus 33:9-11. Here is the first use of *friend* to express God's relationship to a man. What does this imply about how God views being friends with us? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, I cannot be Your friend if I refuse to spend much time with You, waiting on You to...*

2. In Psalm 35:13, 14, and Psalm 41:9, we find the Messiah speaking about those who betrayed Him (see Ps. 35:11, 12). He says He treated them as *friends*. What did this involve, as you see it in these psalms? How was the Messiah a *friend* to those who persecuted Him? *Lord, You remain my Friend even when I...*

3. Proverbs offers insight to God's view of what it means to be a friend. Look at Proverbs 17:17 and 18:24. How is Solomon using the idea of *friend* here? What makes a *friend* a *friend*? *Lord, I'm beginning to think that I need to work on being a better friend with You, as in...*

4. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 offers some additional insight to what friendship entails. Summarize Solomon's teaching here about the nature and importance of friendship. *Show me, Lord, how I can begin to be a better friend, both to You and to...*

5. Finally, look at James 2:23. What made Abraham a *friend* of God? Taking together all these various passages, what was Jesus saying to His disciples by referring to them as *friends*? What does it mean to be a *friend* of Jesus? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“Now sinners are called enemies of God—enemies, that is, of the commands that they do not obey, just as those who obey become friends. The latter are named so from their fellowship; the former from their estrangement, which is freely chosen. For there is neither enmity nor sin without the enemy and the sinner.”
Clement of Alexandria (375-444 AD)

Jesus calls us His friends. Would it be obvious to the people in your Personal Mission Field that you are a friend of Jesus? Why or why not?

Closing Prayer

Show me Your ways, O LORD;

Teach me Your paths.

Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You *are* the God of my salvation;

On You I wait all the day.

Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,

For they *are* from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions;
According to Your mercy remember me,
For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.
Good and upright *is* the LORD;
Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.
The humble He guides in justice,
And the humble He teaches His way.
All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth,
To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

Psalm 25:4-10

Psalm 25:4-10 (*Festal Song; Revive Thy Work, O Lord*)
Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O Lord!
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Remember mercy, Lord, and steadfast love to me!
And all my sins before You let them not remembered be!

My sins have been of old, Your love is new each day;
According to Your goodness, Lord, regard my sinful way.

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way;
The humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

The paths of God are all of love and faithfulness;
All they who keep His covenant the Lord will surely bless.

5 What Are (Jesus') Friends For?

Read and meditate on John 15:15, 16.

Jesus has made us His friends. And by a special means, and for a special reason.

¹⁵“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know his master’s work; but I have called you friends, for all things I have from My Father heard, these also I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose and appointed you to be My friends, and bear much lasting fruit, that all you ask the Father in My Name, and call on Him to do, He will.”

- John 15:15, 16

Reflect

1. Jesus did not call His disciples servants, but friends. What’s the difference? What are the implications of this for you as a follower of Christ? Complete this prayer: *Thank You for calling me Your friend, Lord. Help me to demonstrate that friendship by...*

2. Since we are Jesus’ friends, we know what He’s up to, as He reigns at the right hand of God the Father. Meditate on Psalm 110 and John 14:1-4. What in heaven is Jesus doing on earth? How should this affect the way we live (Matt. 6:33)? *Let my life today, Lord, be a means whereby You...*

3. Jesus entrusted His friends with a very precious mystery – the will of God the Father. How did Jesus make this precious gift known to His disciples? How does He make it known to His friends today? What does He intend His friends to do with this gift? Meditate on Matthew 25:14-30. How can we know when we are being good stewards of the will of the Father? *Help me today, Lord to use the gift You have given me to...*

4. Jesus stated emphatically that He chose His disciples to be His friends. They did not choose Him. What did He mean by this? Is this true of us as well? Explain. *Thank You for choosing me, Lord, because I...*

5. Why did Jesus choose His disciples? What are Jesus’ friends for? How does Jesus expect us to show that we are His friends? What can we do to help make sure this is consistently true of us? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

Since, therefore, he has given us power to become the children of God, let us not be servants but children, so that, in some wonderful and indescribable but real way, we may as servants have the power not to be servants. Let us be servants, indeed, with that virtuous fear that distinguishes the servant that enters into the joy of his lord, but not servants with the fear that has to be cast out and that characterizes one who does not abide in the house forever.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

What are friends for? Well, if you’re *Jesus’* friend, your purpose is to bear fruit. What are the greatest obstacles to a life of consistent and increasing fruitfulness for the Lord?

Closing Prayer

Trust in the LORD, and do good;

Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

Psalm 37.3-6

Psalm 37.1-6 (*Neumark: If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee*)

Let not the wicked make you worry;
Envy not those who break God's Word.
Like dying grass will they be sorry,
And fade like every dying herb.
Trust in the Lord and do His will;
Dwell in His grace, be faithful still.

Delight yourself in God's salvation;
He'll give you all your heart's desire.
Commit to Him your every station,
And His good purpose will transpire.
Your righteousness a blazing light
He will bring forth against the night.

6 How to Love

Read and meditate on John 15.16, 17.

All “these things” define how we are to love one another as Jesus has loved us.

*¹⁶You did not choose Me,
but I chose and appointed you to be
My friends, and bear much lasting fruit, that all
you ask the Father in My Name, and call
on Him to do, He will. ¹⁷And I command
you: Love each other!”*

- John 15.16, 17

Reflect

1. We have a bit more of verse 16 to consider. First, let’s look at that verb *appointed*. It derives from the Greek word which means to *place, set, or put*. We are not here by chance. Nor are we here to do whatever we choose with our lives. Jesus has *set* us here, having chosen us to be His disciples, and He has *appointed* us to bear fruit. What are some of the implications of this for your daily life? At the end of the day, what should you look back on as evidence of having fulfilled the purpose appointed to you? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I know that You have assigned me to this life, and to all...*

2. It’s not just *any* fruit that Jesus has appointed us to bear, but fruit that *remains*. What kind of fruit rots? What kind of fruit *remains*? What’s involved in that kind of fruit coming into being in and through our lives? How can you prepare daily to bear such fruit? *I want to bear abiding fruit for You, Lord, and thus I daily...*

3. Whatever we ask of the Father, if we do so in Jesus’ Name – that is, in line with His reason for having appointed us as disciples – we can know that God will give it to us. How should this shape our prayers? What effects should it have on the *content* of our prayers? On their *frequency*? *Lord, I don’t know how to pray as I should. Teach me to pray like...*

4. “These things” of verse 17 refers to all that Jesus had instructed His disciples in this discourse up to this point. God back and review chapters 14 and 15 to this point. What was Jesus referring to by the phrase *these things*? How does it underscore the importance of these things to know that Jesus *commands* them of us? *Help me always to keep in mind, Lord, that You...*

5. The conjunction in verse 17, *hina*, should be translated, *in order that* or *so that*. “These things” Jesus commands us thus show us how we are to carry out the new commandment to love one another as He has loved us. How can Christians help one another to fulfill this commandment more consistently? How would doing so affect our witness for Christ in our community? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Everything we labor for in this present world scarcely lasts until death. Death intervenes and cuts off the fruit of our labor. But what we do for eternal life remains even after death. It begins to appear only when the fruits of our physical labors cease to be visible. The reward of the one begins when the other is ended. Let one who recognizes that he now bears eternal fruit within his soul think little of the temporal fruits of his labors. Let us work for the fruit that endures; let us work for the fruit that begins at death since death destroys all others.” *Gregory the Great (540-604 AD)*

In the Lord's strength, we can carry out the Lord's command to bear the abiding fruit the Lord has appointed for us. What are the greatest obstacles we must overcome in fulfilling our calling to love as Jesus commands?

Closing Prayer

The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation
Is in the tents of the righteous;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
The right hand of the LORD is exalted;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the LORD.
The LORD has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will go through them,
And I will praise the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD,
Through which the righteous shall enter.
I will praise You,
For You have answered me,
And have become my salvation.
The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the LORD's doing;
It is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
Save now, I pray, O LORD;
O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.
Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD!
We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.
God is the LORD,
And He has given us light;
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
You *are* my God, and I will praise You;
You are my God, I will exalt You.
Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 118.14-29

Psalm 118.14-29 (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

In the Savior we are strong! He is all our strength and song!
To His grace now raise your voice; in His righteousness rejoice!
For the Lord does valiantly; we shall live eternally.
Praise His works with all your breath, you whom He redeems from death.

All who know Christ's righteousness His great Name now thank and bless!
Though His gate full righteous is, He our saving mercy is.
Cast aside and left alone, Christ is now our Cornerstone!

The Gospel of John: John 15.9-17

God has made His Son and Word our salvation: Praise the Lord!

Blest are they who in His Name come and Jesus' grace proclaim.
God His light upon us shines in the Savior's sacrifice.
Praise and thanks to You, O Lord; we extol Your holy Word!
Thanks to You for You are good! Thanks to our great loving God!

7 Chosen Friends

Read and meditate on John 15:9-17.

The measure of Jesus' love is that He laid down His life for His friends. So must Jesus' friends love one another.

⁹"In my love abide, for I have loved you as the Father loves Me. ¹⁰So if you keep My commandments, you will know you are abiding in My love, as I have kept My Father's Word, and so abide in His. ¹¹These things I make known to you that My joy may always dwell in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²And this is My commandment: Love each other, just as I have loved you. ¹³There no greater love can be than this, that someone love so much that he would lay his life down for his friends. ¹⁴And you are My friends if what I command, you do. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know his master's work; but I have called you friends, for all things I have from My Father heard, these also I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose and appointed you to be My friends, and bear much lasting fruit, that all you ask the Father in My Name, and call on Him to do, He will. ¹⁷And I command you: Love each other!"

- John 15:9-17

Reflect

1. Jesus has chosen us to be His friends. Friends of Jesus: What does that mean to you? Complete this prayer: *Lord, thank You, Lord, for choosing me as Your friend. Let me show my friendship today by...*

2. Those who are friends of Jesus are loved by Him. And the friends of Jesus love one another as He has loved them. Jesus laid down His life for His friends. What does it mean for you to lay down your life for the friends of Jesus? *Help me show Your love to Your friends today Lord, by...*

3. Chosen (v. 16), appointed (v. 16), commanded (v. 17): Put these three words together into a single sentence to explain what it means to be a friend of Jesus. *Lord, as I think about my life each day, and what it means to be Your friend, I...*

4. Jesus has entrusted us, His friends, with all things that He has heard from His Father. What are those things? What are we supposed to do with them? What was Jesus' purpose in entrusting us with all things He had heard from His Father? How can we improve on our stewardship of what Jesus has entrusted to us? *I need Your guidance and wisdom, Lord, so that...*

5. The key to friendship with Jesus, and all that friendship entails, is abiding in Jesus' love (v. 9). What does

this mean? How would you explain to a new believer what it means to abide in Jesus' love? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“This [love] is our fruit about which he said, ‘I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.’ And what he added, ‘That whatever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you, he will certainly give us if we love one another, seeing that this is the very thing he has also given us in choosing us when we had no fruit, because we had not chosen him. He appointed us that we should bring forth fruit—that is, that we should love one another—a fruit that we cannot have apart from him, just as the branches can do nothing apart from the vine.’” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

We are the friends of Jesus. We must not squander this privilege, but invest it in bearing abiding fruit for the Lord. How will you pursue this high and holy calling today?

Closing Prayer

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!
All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.
All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.
A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,
They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done *this*.

Psalm 22:23-31

Psalm 22:29-31 (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

All the prosperous of the earth shall before His mercy fall;
Bending low before His worth, hear them humbly on Him call.
Even those low in the grave He will by His mercy save.

Let the generations all witness to His saving grace;
Let them to all nations call, “Bow before His holy face!”
Let the children of the earth hear of Jesus' saving worth!

The Gospel of John: John 15.9-17

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Jesus commands us to abide in His love. How do we abide in Jesus' love?
2. Jesus calls us His friends. Why? What makes us His friends? How should others be able to tell that we are friends of Jesus?
3. All that Jesus has heard from the Father He has spoken to us. Where shall we look to learn these things? Why should we learn them?
4. What can keep us from realizing Jesus purpose for making us His friends? How can believers help one another to be true friends of Jesus?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 15.9-17? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.