

Jesus, Our Brother and Friend

For the last several weeks we have been examining the three biblical roles of Christ in the Old Testament and that he fulfilled. We have contemplated the coming of Jesus Christ into the world as God who became man. In his role as Prophet to challenge us, as priest to bring us to be one with God, and the King to rule us, Jesus has secured a relationship with God. I preached about these three roles leading up to Christmas. Having celebrated Christmas, I would like us to consider one more message about Jesus having broken through the barrier between man and God. This is not a message about an official role of Jesus but the relationship that we have with him once we belong to him. There are many people who fulfill roles in our lives, we are thankful for, and who we admire as they serve in the roles to which they are called. It might be the role of a politician in supporting the lives of the unborn, support for Israel, bringing originalists to the Supreme Court, moving to get vaccines available. On a closer level, this might include a store manager, a policeman, a clerk, and others. However they have blessed us, and however friendly they have been, we do not consider them to be in a relationship with us as friend, though. I have been blessed to count three of my teachers to have become my friends: one from high school, one from Bible College, and one from secular College. I have always respected my teachers and I am deeply humbled for them to have considered me their friend. This message is different as we consider Jesus as not only having the role of being our Savior but now to see Him in our relationship with Him as friend and brother.

1. Friends and brothers.

The world's idea of a brotherhood is not the same as God's. Where Christ seeks to include all through the sacrifice of Himself on the cross and tasting death for every man, the world is prejudiced. The world *pretends* that all are brothers and then *excludes* people, God does *not* see all as brothers but then seeks to include them.

Viroqua High School officials chose to cancel their March 23rd Diversity Day activities after Liberty Counsel presented legal precedent requiring inclusion of the viewpoints of Christians and former homosexuals.

The school scheduled sessions for the students that presented the viewpoints of Hmong, Jews, Muslims, Native Americans, African-Americans, homosexuals, Latinos, Buddhists, the physically disadvantaged, and the economically disadvantaged,

but not Christians or former homosexuals.

After a school official stated that the viewpoints of Christians and former homosexuals would be excluded, a resident contacted Liberty Counsel on behalf of many other concerned Viroqua residents.

Liberty Counsel sent a letter to the District Administrator, explaining that the censorship of the viewpoints of Christians and former homosexuals violated the Establishment Clause and the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection guarantee. A few days later, the District Administrator confirmed in a telephone call that Diversity Day had been canceled.

In 2004, the Board also canceled Diversity Day in response to a citizen petition, but then reinstated it after spring elections changed the members on the Board. Unlike 2004, however, this time school officials were confronted with precedent from a federal district court in Michigan that ruled unconstitutional a similar exclusion from a Diversity Day panel.

The president and general counsel of Liberty Counsel, stated, "...One of the Diversity Day organizers labeled the former homosexual's viewpoint as 'non-positive.' This is yet another attempt to indoctrinate our youth with the harmful message that homosexuals cannot change. While touting the message of tolerance, homosexual activists refuse to be tolerant of opposing viewpoints. Our youth deserve to know the truth about homosexuality - that people can choose to overcome same-sex attractions and that acting on those attractions results in devastating physical, mental, and spiritual consequences."

— www.gtbe.org, also based on

madison.com/news/local/viroqua-high-school-cancels-diversity-day/article_3dd62b0a-b5a1-5787-b6c5-b0f52df1a499.html

The world *pretends* that all are brothers and then *excludes* people, God does *not* see all as brothers but *then* seeks to *include* them.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 15:18-19 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but

because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Although all may come to Christ, not all will come to Christ. Although all *may* be brothers, not all *are* brothers. One of the great Satanic deceptions has been the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2Thess 3:2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

Rom 9:6-8 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

The further away someone is in friendship, the more lightly you hold them. To some, friend only means someone you can take advantage of. One of the worst and most blatant cases of over familiarity has got to be the telemarketer.

"Hello, Paul, how are you today?" "Oh, I'm feeling a little cranky, I had a case of bronchitis last month and I have a lingering cough. Have you ever had anything like that? By the way, how are you doing?...Good, good...Have you read any good books lately?"

I say all this to illustrate the fact that we might do the same thing to Jesus Christ. In contemporary Christian music it has become popular to sing songs about Christ as if He were our lover. Others have expectations of Christ as if He were a big Santa Claus in the sky.

What does it mean to be a friend and brother?

Prov 17:17 A friend loveth at all

times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Prov 18:24 A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.

There is something special about being a brother or sister. I thank God for my brothers today. The relationship I have with them is really more based on our adult years together since that is when we each truly started serving God. There was a time when my younger brother was not, and it was sad that our relationship was superficial. However, even when things are bad, there is something inescapable about the fact that someone is your brother.

To have someone is a friend is a different kind of special. There are those who have gone out from us that we grieve over because we had every reason to look on them as friends. This is what makes the betrayal by Judas so hurtful:

Ps 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

John 13:18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

My daughter, Annie, called me "Pastor," when she was very young, one day. She was calling me what the other kids called me. She was so precious. I knelt down and said to her, "Honey, I am the pastor, but you get to call me something special...you get to call me 'Daddy.'" Even greater than that, though is the fact that there is no question that my greatest earthly friend is my wife Nancy. From the moment I met her I knew that I would have no question that she would catch me in a "Trust Fall," although for her sake she should be allowed to catch me before my fall gained too much momentum. In a Trust Fall, the objective is to develop trust by having one person stand facing away from another and, without looking back, falls backwards, experiencing how important it is to have trust that the other will catch them. After 44 years of knowing her, I think it is pretty credible to say that we really meant it when we made our vows to each other. My trust in her constancy has proven to be justified, and I know that I would never have entertained going anywhere else but to stay with her. Although we have certain different tastes and ways of prioritizing things, I continue to have complete confidence in our relationship. I strive to exercise that constancy in my friendships, but I know you will not feel slighted to know that all other

friendships can only be nearly so great. As your pastor, I am going to deal with you as objectively and impartially as I can. I am going to take you to God's Word knowing that I am representing God and not my own interests. But it is because of friendship that I strive to be constant. We have to be careful to not become overconfident, though, because it is still possible to fall into sin or to just develop mental illness and become like another person. Could you imagine the tragedy that would be? For as great as that relationship is with my wife, it can be surpassed and is only surpassed by the friendship and brotherhood we have with Jesus Christ.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life,
which God, that cannot lie,
promised before the world began;

2. Jesus is our friend and brother.

Jesus is the ultimate brother born for adversity who sticketh closer than a brother.

I can only imagine what it is like for those who have gone through the hellish terrors of combat, who have trusted their lives to each other. We can have infinitely greater confidence in the love of Jesus because He excelled that kind of adversity. He went through the greatest adversity possible, laying down His life for far more than our temporal, earthly life. He laid down His life for our eternal life.

John 15:11-13 These things have
I spoken unto you, that my joy
might remain in you, and *that*
your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment,
That ye love one another, as I
have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than
this, that a man lay down his life
for his friends.

Rom 8:27-29 And he that
searcheth the hearts knoweth
what *is* the mind of the Spirit,
because he maketh intercession
for the saints according to *the*
will of God.

28 And we know that all things
work together for good to them
that love God, to them who are
the called according to *his*
purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he
also did predestinate *to be*
conformed to the image of his
Son, that he might be the
firstborn among many brethren.

Matt 12:46-50 While he yet
talked to the people, behold, *his*
mother and his brethren stood
without, desiring to speak with
him.

47 Then one said unto him,
Behold, thy mother and thy

brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Heb 2:9-11 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Isn't it great to know that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brother!?

3. Hearing from Jesus.

It is easy to talk about the theological roles of Jesus, but talking about relating to Jesus is very difficult. I can share what it *means* to be a friend and brother, *that* there is a relationship we have with Him as our brother and friend, but I can not do justice to describe how we actually hear from Him.

Part of the problem is that with the completion of God's Word, we do not receive additional inspired messages from God.

1Cor 13:8-12 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

There are times when I am sure that

God is reaching me in my heart, and other times when I wonder if it is Him. Just because someone is certain that Jesus is telling them to do something, that certainty is misplaced. We knew someone years ago who was so certain that God had "told" him to bless a Christian brother with a VCR. He was somewhat offended when we tried to explain that God had not told him to do that. He had prayed about and felt that we were being critical of his spirituality and his ability to hear from God. We had to explain to him that the brother didn't believe in having a TV and a VCR would be useless to him. Internal experience is something that should not be used as proof positive for anything, although there *are* times when it can cause us to think.

There *are* some principles to keep in mind about hearing Jesus.

- Jesus is always with us.

Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

- He will speak to us through His Word

Sometimes in prayer as I talk to Jesus, He will use the Holy Spirit to bring Scriptures to my mind in response.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

- Jesus will not always make *everything* known.

He *might* reveal things later, but not necessarily. Even though the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, it comes at the discretion of Christ.

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

- There comes a time to bring conversation to an end and to get to work.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

As with any conversation, there comes the time to close and to get back

to work. We have been created unto good works and we need to take the things we have received from Christ and use our God given talents and opportunities to serve Him, that people will see our work and glorify God.

Before Jesus can be your friend, He has to be your Savior. From that point on, we cultivate that friendship, looking forward to the day when we stand in front of Jesus in friendship perfected.

1. Friends and brothers. John 6:37, 15:18-19, 1:10-13, 2Thess 3:2, Rom 9:6-8, Prov 17:17, 18:24, Ps 41:9, John 13:18, Titus 1:2
2. Jesus is our friend and brother. John 15:11-13, Rom 8:27-29 , Matt 12:46-50, Heb 2:9-11
3. Hearing from Jesus. 1Cor 13:8-12, Matt 28:20, Heb 13:5 , John 14:26, 16:12, Luke 19:13