

You are My Friends

By George Davis and Michael Clark

It is said that if you find one true friend in the course of your lifetime, you are very fortunate. People go through their entire lives looking for someone, anyone to love them, value them, and validate them. "I want to love someone and be loved by them!" they say, as they move from one failed relationship to another, one betrayed friendship to another, hoping that this one will yield that once in a lifetime, "happily ever after" relationship. So rarely is this deep inner yearning for selfless love and friendship satisfied in man that one philosopher wrote, "A Friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature." - Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882).

Deep within the human heart is a primal desire for love and friendship that echoes the passion of its Creator. These aspirations, that we tend to think are unique to the human condition, mirror the heart-passion of God, our Creator, who actively seeks friendship with his creation. This is reflected in His relationship with Adam as they walked and talked together in the garden "in the cool of the day." The effect called loneliness was first felt when that friendship was broken because of Adam's sin, and there, for the first time, the voice of God was heard throughout the garden, "Adam where are you?" Where are you Adam? Why are you fearful and alone? Ever since then, God has sought to bring man back into that cool of the day fellowship with Him.

Contrary to what is taught in some religious circles, God is not like the Wizard of Oz, a divine despot hiding behind a curtain while He demands that people bow before him in fear and trembling. He is not ego driven and this could never satisfy the heart of the One who IS love. He does not want fawning submission but reciprocal love and friendship. He is not that different from us who are created in His image. He wants to share His heart with others--to love them and be loved by them. Could the Creator of all things have any other feelings toward what He has lovingly created?

This divine yearning is more than evident throughout the scriptures. Even before the flood in the darkest of times God found a friend in a man named Enoch of whom it is written, "[Enoch walked steadily with God. And then one day he was simply gone: God took him](#)" (Genesis 5:24 MSG). Talk about "the missing"!

It is this longing for friendship, within the heart of God and His longing to catch a people away unto himself, that we want to briefly share with you now. We do this in hopes that those of you who have been held in bondage to a false image of an angry, vindictive God, may know that Friend that is closer than a brother!

The Friend of God

Many years after Adam died and Enoch was caught up, mankind drifted far away from God. At that time, no one knew God and had fellowship with Him. Instead, men worshiped gods created from their own darkened imaginations. All was shrouded in mystery and superstition. God called a man named Abraham out of the idolatrous society of Babylon to bring him into fellowship with Himself. After many years of sojourning with God in a foreign land and learning who God really is through testing, Abraham came to be known as "the friend of God." God later said to Abraham's descendants, Israel, "But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendant of Abraham my friend" (Isaiah 41:8 KJ2000). It is interesting to note that with the passing of Abraham the relationship with Israel had degenerated from friendship to mere servant-hood.

Jesus told His disciples, "...the servant knows not what his lord does..." (John 15:15). Friends share their deepest thoughts. So it was between God and Abraham. God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Genesis 18:17 KJ2000) Why would God keep no secrets from Abraham? He continues, "For I have known him..." (18:19). God had found a friend in Abraham with whom He could share His concerns, aspirations and thoughts. In him He would bless all nations. God's Blessing to the nations, Jesus Christ, came from the lineage of Abraham.

Face to Face

The psalmist wrote of Moses, "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." (Psalms 103:7 KJV). It is one thing to see another's actions and try to understand them from that, but quite another thing to know them so well that you actually know their ways. You know them so well that when you hear gossip about them, you know that what you heard is not possible for them or is "just like them," which ever is the case. Unlike the people of Israel who saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and worshiped from a distance, each at the

entrance of his tent, the Lord spoke with Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend (See Exodus 33:10-11).

It is one thing to see God's works--the pillar of fire and thundering of the cloud and stand trembling at a distance, and another thing to see through and know the heart of the one who gives these signs and come boldly into His presence as Moses did. While Israel sought to distance themselves from God, Moses talked with God as a man speaks to his Friend.

It is remarkable enough that a mortal would talk to God, friend to Friend, but what did they talk about? Exodus 33 and 34, record this amazing conversation.

Moses: "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." (Exodus 33:12-13)

God: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." (33:14)

Moses: "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." (33: 15-16)

God: "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." (33:17)

Finally, Moses gets to the point.

Moses: "Please, show me Your glory." (33:18)

God: "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion...You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live...Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will

cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." (33: 19-23)

How much this must have pleased the Lord! Finally, someone who wants to know Him!

We find the rest of the story in Exodus. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Moses and proclaimed the name or glory of the Lord saying,

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7).

What was Moses' response to this revelation of God's name, character or ways? He "made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." (See Exodus 34:8) How could he do anything less! He had seen what few others had seen! He had seen what Adam had seen in the garden in the cool of the day. He had seen what Enoch saw as he walked with God. He had seen what Abraham saw; a Friend, kind and benevolent, whose anger is tempered by His mercy. He had seen the heart of Him that made the mountain quake. He had seen through the dark cloud, lightening and smoke to the very heart of God!

God's secret thoughts are known only to His friends. These are the ones who trust Him and He trusts them with a foreknowledge of what He desires to do as He did with Abraham and the prophets (See Genesis 18:17, also Psalms 25:14 and Amos 3:7).

God appealed for hundreds of year to Israel to be His friend, but they would not. Finally, He had Hosea take to wife a woman who had a wandering heart so that they could see what they were doing to Him.

Then said the LORD unto me, "Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love flagons of wine." (Hosea 3:1 KJ21)

One of the deepest wounds known to the human heart is to have a spouse who has become your friend turn from you to another lover. How many times has man been unfaithful to God and wounded His heart? It continues on today, even in churches.

"You are my friends"

God's greatest gesture of love and friendship to mankind is His Son, Jesus Christ. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry on earth, He said something to His disciples that should capture the mind of every true believer and lover of God. He redefined friendship in the loftiest of terms.

"This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. From now on I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:12-15 KJ2000)

Friendship, as Jesus defines it, is more than a mere mutually dependent relationship or casual politeness. It is a sharing of the highest order, an utter giving of ones self, holding nothing back, not even ones own life. There is no greater love or friendship than this. Jesus bestowed the very honor on His disciples as the Son of God that God bestowed on Abraham, the friend of God, who was taken so deeply into God's trust that God would keep no secrets from him.

Paul wrote, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Corinthians 4:1 NASB) Yes, he refers to us as servants, but look deeper at the meaning of the word *mysterias*. The Greek word here is *musterion*. Appendix 193 of The Companion Bible states:

It [*musterion*] occurs frequently in the Apocryphal books; which, though of no use for establishing doctrine, are of great value in determining the meaning of Biblical usage of Greek words. In these books *musterion* always means the secret of friends, or of a king, etc. 2 See Tobit 12:7,11. Judith 2:2. Wisdom 2:22. (translated "mysteries"); 14:23. Ecclesiasticus 22:22; 27:16,17,21. 2Maccabees 13:21. (Revised Version). The passage in Judith is remarkable: for Nabuchodonsor calls his captains and great men together just before entering on a campaign, and "communicated with them his secret counsel",

literally "the mystery of his will". This is exactly the same usage as in Ephesians 1:9, except that the Greek word for will or counsel is different.

The Chinese philosopher Meng Tzu (372-289 B.C.), better known by his Latinized name Mencius wrote, "Friendship is one mind in two bodies." This certainly does describe the friendship that God seeks. He wants to bring us into His confidence so deeply that His thoughts become ours, until "...we [plural] have the [singular] mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16 KJV, parenthesized emphasis ours)

A New and Lasting Covenant

One of the great failings of Christianity today is that it fortifies a false opinion that only a few are taken into God's trust and that they alone as His enlightened ones are the conveyors of God's mind to the "ignorant masses." This deception stands in stark contrast to Jeremiah's prophesy regarding the new covenant. In Jeremiah 31:32, God made it very clear that the New Covenant would not be according to the covenant that he made with Israel in the day that He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. This new covenant would be very different.

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:33-34 NKJV. See also Hebrews 8)

Under the Old Covenant the performance of man was crucial. In this new covenant the prime mover is God. God said, "I will... I will... I will...!" It is God who makes it happen! It is God who writes on our hearts! It is God who teaches us! The mantra of religious men who sermonize, "know the Lord," shall no longer be heard for this is inconsistent with the realities of the new covenant in which the anointing teaches all things to all believers. (See 1 John 2: 20, 27).

The Old Covenant, which required mediators and oracles, is now obsolete. (See Hebrews 8:13.) In this New Covenant, each believer is taught of God. God now pours His Spirit out upon all flesh. What was once bestowed only on a select few is now poured out upon sons and daughters, young men and old men, (See Acts 2) all are

anointed and all are priests. Though much that we see around us today falls short of this ideal, it is none the less God's view of the New Covenant. Is it yours? Does the Spirit speak prophetic secrets to you? He wants to.

Dear reader, God is befriending you. Dare to believe it. He desires to have a face to face friendship with you, just like he had with Abraham and Moses--just like He has with His Son and His Son had with His disciples. He wants to take you into His secret counsel and share the *musterion*, the secret of friends, with you! (See James 2:23 and 2 Chronicles 20:7).

The veil of the temple has been torn asunder. God through His Son has reached out to man and removed the religious cast system of laity and priest. Jesus showed friendship to the proud Pharisees and Sadducees by exposing their sin of pride, out of love. He showed friendship to the sinners, tax collectors and harlots, who knew all too well their own sins by entering their homes and eating with them and forgiving their sins. It was the ascended Christ who said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." For this the self-righteous Pharisees called Him a friend of sinners, a wine bibber and a glutton (See Matthew 11:19). The Jewish religious system had made an outcast of the lowly sinner. When those who were bound by Satan experienced Christ's love, they could sing out with the Sulamite maiden of Solomon, "[His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.](#)" (Song of Solomon 5:16 KJ2000). Yes, the words of His mouth were sweet to their dying souls and His friendship divine. His friendship and loving words are yours today if you will seek His face, not just His hands.