

FRIENDS OF CHRIST

John 15:14-17

by Jack Arvin

INTRODUCTION:

- A. If ever there existed a master-slave relationship this was it.
 - 1. Jesus, the Eternal Word of God, had participated in the creation of man (John 1:1-3).
 - 2. These mortal men, though basically good, were often slow to believe him (John 14:9); they did not even consider themselves on a par with him.
- B. Yet, Jesus calls them his friends.
- C. Just what is involved in the expression?

I. There is a Spirit, a Feeling in Friendship Completely Foreign to the Master-Slave Arrangement.

- A. Love.
 - 1. There is no necessity of love at all in the master-slave relations. The one purchases, the other is purchased; the one commands, the other obeys. There need not be even a word directly exchanged between the two.
 - 2. Yet Jesus based his whole relationship with the disciples on love; his love in dying for them (John 15:13) and their loving obedience to him (John 14:15).
- B. Trust
 - 1. Under no compulsion whatever, Jesus freely told the disciples his plans, his hopes, for them and for the world (John 15:15).
 - 2. He trusted **them** with a vital role in the accomplishment of this work (II Cor. 4:7).
 - 3. They trusted him for guidance and blessing in their work (Col. 2:12; Rom. 4:21).
- C. Nearness.
 - 1. A master and slave may stand elbow to elbow and yet be miles apart in thinking, ambition, purpose and spirit.
 - 2. Friends are near each other at all times in aims, thinking, spirit.
 - 3. Jesus promised to be with them always (Matt. 28: 20), to work with them (Mark 16:20; II Cor. 6:1).
- D. Giving.
 - 1. The master owns slaves for what he can get from them. If any are unprofitable he disposes of them. The one uses the other to gain.
 - 2. Friendship is based on a giving as well as receiving.
 - 3. Friendship is fully willing to be used to the help of its friend as Jesus was completely spent for us.

II. A Word of Caution.

- A. While the attitude of Jesus toward his own is that of friend—loving, trusting, near us and giving to us, we must be cautious in our attitude toward him.
- B. We must look upon ourselves as servants (I Cor. 6:19, 20), unprofitable servants at that (Luke 17:10).
- C. In this manner we are less likely to be guilty of presumptuous sins (Ps. 19:13).
- D. We cannot afford to use our liberty as license to go beyond God's requirements for us (I Pet. 2:16).

III. The Terms of Friendship (John 15:14).

- A. There is an "If" in this matter conveying the idea that there are conditions for us to meet before Christ considers us his friends.
- B. "Ye do" — we must be active, not passive, in the matter.
 - 1. The tense of the verb in Greek is present which means the action is progressive, continuing. We are to keep on doing the things required.
 - 2. It is personal not done by proxy.
- C. "Whatsoever" — any and everything at all.
 - 1. There must be no favorite commands to hold.
 - 2. There are no "non-essentials" to be left out.
 - 3. The idea of intensive study is included that we may know "whatsoever" is required.
- D. "I command you" — the source of the order must be Christ.
 - 1. Men, no matter how well meaning nor learned, are unable to modify or substitute for the commands of Christ.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Christ has given himself for man as the friend of sinners.
- 2. He counts all his friends who obey his commands which are:
 - a. Faith (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Repentance (Acts 17:30).
 - c. Confession (Rom. 10:10).
 - d. Baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
 - e. Continuation in the faith (Rev. 2:10).
- 3. On this basis, are you friend or foe?