

Friends are Friends Forever if the Lord's the Lord of Them

Proverbs 17:17

Introduction:

I want to tell story about a friend of mine.

Thomas Patton was baptized this morning, shortly after our worship assembly dismissed. Friends are friends forever if the Lord's the Lord of them!

I. Friends go above and beyond.

Friends will do the unthinkable for one another.

When Abraham heard his relative, Lot, was taken captive, his loyalty sprang into action.

Genesis 14:14-16 reads, "When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people."

Would you go above and beyond for the people seated near you?

II. Friends become family.

People of different ages, from various parts of the world forge friendships.

Ruth and Naomi became friends and ultimately family.

"Ruth said [to Naomi], 'Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me' (Ruth 1:16-17).

Have you forged a friendship with someone so strong they became family?

III. Friends at first sight.

Most friendships are built over time, but some develop almost instantly.

David and Jonathan became friends at first sight.

1 Samuel 18:1-3 tells how their relationship formed; "Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself."

Are you looking for new connections?

IV. Friends feel for each other.

King Saul put pressure on his officers to find David, so Doeg the Edomite tells Saul about Ahimelech's dealing with David.

Saul suspected that Ahimelech and the other priests were helping David hide from him, so Saul order their execution.

Saul's men refused to carry out his orders and Doeg the Edomite killed 85 priests and their families.

"But (1 Samuel 22:20-23) one of the sons of Ahimelech...named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar, 'I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely

tell Saul. I have brought about the death of every person in your father's household. Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life, for you are safe with me.”

Unfortunate circumstances bring people together as friends who protect and feel for each other.

Do you feel for one another?

V. Friends of a friend will try to help.

Your friends are my friends, and my friends are your friends.

David's friend Nahash had a son Hanun whom David tried to befriend.

In 2 Samuel 10:2, after the death of Nahash, “David said, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.’ So David sent some of his servants to console him concerning his father.”

Hanun's advisers falsely concluded that the ambassadors were actually spies, so they publicly humiliated the consolers David sent to Hanun.

The ensuing retaliation resulted in war.

Friends of friends do not always work out to become new friends.

Have you closed off your friend circle so no one new can enter?

VI. Friends should be loyal to the end.

Unconditional friendship brims with profound respect and little expectation of reciprocation.

An example of this friendship is witnessed in 2 Samuel 15:19-21.

“Then the king (David) said to Ittai [E-tie] the Gittite, ‘Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; return to your own place. You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you.’ But Ittai [E-tie] answered the king and said, ‘As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be.’”

Togetherness breeds friendship.

Are you loyal to your friends, willing to be by their side, to serve their needs?

VII. Friends leave an imprint on us.

1 Kings 5:1 tells that “Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been a friend of David.”

Solomon was granted “rest on every side” so he intended “to build a house for the name of the LORD.”

Solomon requested cedars from Lebanon for the building of the temple.

1 Kings 5:7 tells that “When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly and said, ‘Blessed be the Lord today, who has given to David a wise son over this great people.’”

The quality of a person is not in their name but in their actions.

Friends know the quality of a man's descendants.

Is your friendship leaving an imprint on others?

VIII. Friends draw closer when needed.

When adversity hits, friends get there fast, they feel pain, and they comfort us.

Job 2:11-13 illustrate this thought, “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.”

Friends draw near but do not crowd, they sympathize and allow mourning, and they comfort without a word.

How fast can you get to your friends? How fast can they get to you?

IX. Friends stick together.

Elijah and Elisha stuck together in 2 Kings 2:2, “Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel.”

Not long after this journey, Elijah was taken up into heaven.

On this journey, Elisha repeatedly affirmed his loyalty to Elijah.

Do you stick close to your friends?

X. Friends help friends to help others.

When Daniel was appointed ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief over all the wise men there, Daniel made a request of the King.

Daniel 2:49 says, “Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king’s court.”

God may lead someone to help their friends, so they can help others.

Do you empower friends to help more people?

XI. Friends can speak candidly with one another.

Jesus with His disciples visited the house of Martha in Luke 10:38.

Martha was the sister of Mary, and they had a brother named Lazarus.

After he died, Jesus referred to him as “our friend Lazarus.”

Martha spoke frankly with Jesus, “‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world’” (John 11:21—27).

Do you speak the truth about Jesus in an honest and straightforward way with your friends?

XII. Friends introduce friends to other friends.

In the last chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans he introduces friends to one another, asking them to greet those close to him.

He instructed, Romans 16:3-4, "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."

Wisely selected friends are worth sharing with others.

Do you share your friends with those who need a friend?

XIII. Friends look out for one another.

They are concerned about the interests of Christ, they send others when they cannot be there themselves, they are concerned for the sick, and those they have been separated from.

Philippians 2:19-26 "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly. But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick."

Do you look out for your friends the way Paul's friends looked out for one another?

Application:

Proverbs 17:17 reads, "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."

Friends are friends forever if the Lord's the Lord of them.

Conclusion:

Does your friendship imitate these friends of the Bible?

They are examples of friendship and having love for one another.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Jesus laid down His life for you because He wants you to be His friend.