

Dimensions of friendship love

Luke Pomery in fellowship with the presbytery

Notes prepared for Sunday 2 April 2023

Introduction

We shall be considering two of the types of love described in the Scriptures. The first is *agape*, which we shall refer to as '*offering-love*'. The second is *phileo* (translated as friends) which we shall refer to as '*friendship-love*'.

Jesus talked about both of these loves when He said, 'Greater love [agape] has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends [phileo].' Joh 15:13. Jesus explained that the activity of *agape* is *offering*. We find that as we are progressively restored to the culture of offering-love there is *an accompanying growth in our expression of friendship-love towards one another*. This is our key meditation.

We shall consider five unique dimensions of friendship-love described in the Scriptures:

1. Laying down our lives
2. Meeting one another
3. Speaking to one another
4. Obedience to the word
5. Affection towards one another

Laying down our lives

The apostle John explained that by this we know offering-love, that Jesus *laid down His life for His friends*. 1Jn 3:16. Jesus is not ashamed to call us 'His friends'. Heb 2:11. He remains committed to our sanctification even if we begin to deviate from it.

The apostle John continued, 'And we also ought to *lay down our lives* for the brethren'. 1Jn 3:16. Friendship-love is demonstrated by those who lay their life down in offering for the other. This is the *first dimension of friendship* which we need to understand by illumination. Jesus said there was no greater expression of offering-love. Joh 15:13.

Meeting one another

The LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) is our Friend. They desire a personal relationship with each one of us. The Scriptures account that the LORD talked with Moses face to face, as a man talks with his friend. Exo 33:11. Therefore, the *second dimension of friendship* is knowing and *meeting* the LORD, Who has come to meet us.

Furthermore, friends meet and know one another face to face. We cannot say that we have fellowship with God but hate our brother and will not even speak kindly to them. If there is one of the brethren of whom you say, 'I will not talk to that person' - then the Scripture plainly says that you are in darkness; you lie and do not practice the truth. 1Jn 1:6. 1Jn 2:9.

Speaking to one another

The Father loves the Son with friendship-love and shows Him all things. Joh 5:20. Jesus is *our Friend* because He speaks to us concerning everything which the Father has declared about our sonship. Joh 15:15. Furthermore, Jesus rebukes and chastens those whom He loves as His friends. Rev 3:19. He does this through overcoming presbyteries in His right hand. Rev 1:20. In that sense, the messenger is our friend, because they are *speaking* to us about our sonship. Here is the *third dimension of friendship*. The question for us to consider is, 'Are we friends of the messenger?'

We are called to be a faithful friend to one another. Solomon taught, 'Open rebuke is better than [friendship] love carefully concealed. Faithful are the *wounds of a friend*, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' Pro 27:5-6. We speak to one another according to the truth of sonship. In so doing, we free one another to their response of obedience.

Obedience to the word

Jesus is a friend of the Father because He is *obedient* in all things. Joh 5:19. We are a friend to Jesus, and to the presbytery, because we believe what He says and we are obedient to His commands. Joh 15:14. Abraham was counted as a friend of God forever because He believed God's word and was obedient to participate in the offering of Yahweh. 2Ch 20:7.

We cannot be a friend to God or to one another, including our family members, without being obedient to the messenger word which is calling us to offering. *Obedience* is the *fourth dimension of friendship*. In light of this, the apostle Paul stated, 'If anyone does not *love [as a friend]* the Lord Jesus Christ [that is, they are not obedient], let him be accursed.' 1Co 16:22.

Affection towards one another

Jesus has an earnest affection for each one of His friends. Php 1:8. Joh 20:2. Likewise, we have an unfeigned and appropriate expression of affection towards our friends. Hence, many of the New Testament writers concluded their letters encouraging us to 'greet one another with a holy kiss [of friendship]'. 1Co 16:20. Friendship *affection* is the *fifth dimension of friendship*. The affection that belongs to friendship is seen when we are interested in one another, show compassion, are tender-hearted and are courteous towards one another. 1Pe 3:8. Friendship affection for our brethren is also described in the Scriptures as 'brotherly kindness'. 2Pe 1:7.