

Meeting God's Heart Need 7 of 8

Abraham—God's Friend

#0234

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 4, 1972

In the second chapter of James' epistle, we will have our opening text for our study tonight. James 2:23:

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God”
James 2:23.

What was Abraham called? The friend of God. Notice it doesn't say that God was Abraham's friend. Doubtless He was. But this says that Abraham was God's friend. What a title—the friend of God!

If I told you tonight that I was the friend of the governor of the state, you would say, "Well, I wonder how that came about." Suppose I should tell you that I am a personal friend of the president, President Nixon. You would say, "My, he must be somebody."

Abraham was whose friend? *God's* friend:

Let's see who called him that. Let's turn over to the book of Isaiah and see if we can find where James got that idea that Abraham was called the friend of God because James is drawing on the Old Testament scripture, Isaiah 41:8, and we will see who it is that calls Abraham, the friend of God. Here God is addressing His people, Israel, and He says:

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend” Isaiah 41:8.

Who called Abraham God's friend? God did. Do you think God knows who His friends are? Yes. And God, looking down at this world says, “There is My friend.”

Wouldn't you like to have that experience and that title, to have Jesus call you His friend? Well, I have good news for you: Turn to John 15:15:

“From now on I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you” John 15:15.

You know it is a wonderful thing to be a servant of Jesus. Paul uses that title often—Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. But here the Savior longs to lift our thinking above that relationship. He is talking to us about something far more wonderful than being servants. He says, “I am not calling you servants. I am calling you *friends*.”

A servant does not know what his master does. He just does what he is told. And it is a good thing to do what our Lord says, isn't it? Yes. We all should be good servants. Good soldiers, go where He sends us, and do what He tells us. But He says, "You are a lot more than servants. You are My friends. If you were servants, you might do what I told you, but you wouldn't understand. But oh, I want to share with you all that My Father has shared with Me.”

“All things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you” John 15:15.

I was telling you the other night about how there is something in our human hearts that we long to be needed; we long to fill a place of real need in somebody's life. That is what we are to God. But tonight I would like to have you think of something else that is very human, very natural. And we may not always like to admit it, but then we had just as well because it is a fact. We like to be on the inside track. We like to be in the inner circle. We like to hear things that are going on, and we like to hear them before everybody else does. Don't we?

As I say, we might not like to admit it. We might think there is something wrong about it. You know most things that are wrong, friends, are just a selfish perversion of something that is right. Did you know that?

There is nothing wrong with wanting to be on the inside track. God made us that way. But friends, what a pity to take that wonderful longing He has put into our hearts, and get bothered because it isn't satisfied by some other poor human being. That is not the thing that is going to satisfy us. The thing that is going to satisfy us is to be on the inside track with God—to be close with Him.

Don't you know it made Abraham happy to be the friend of God? Why, just think of that day when God the Son, Jesus Christ, with two angels, visited Abraham, had a meal with him. Abraham did not know who he was entertaining, did He? But before they left, he found out. And do you remember what Christ said to Abraham, as He introduced the subject?

“Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?”
Genesis 18:17.

And God talked things over with Abraham. What was it He came to talk with him about? The destruction of Sodom. Sodom had gotten so wicked. There is a world that is getting wicked like that now, with crime and vice, and immorality of every kind, as bold as ever in the cities of the plain. The time had come to judge Sodom.

But now notice the God of the universe will not do that without spending some time with His friend, Abraham, who lives near Sodom.

Think of it, friends! God wanted to counsel with Abraham. And Abraham didn't say, "Oh Lord, I haven't anything to say. You know all about it. You just go ahead and do it. And if there is anything you want me to do, tell me. I am Your servant." Abraham was properly humble, and we ought to be. But friends, he did not let his humility lessen his boldness, his confidence.

And when God told Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom because of the terrible sins, Abraham said, "Lord, would you destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

Now, would God do that? And Abraham said, "Lord, suppose there were fifty righteous people in that city." That didn't sound like very many, and Abraham knew there were not very many down there. He said, "Lord, would you spare the city for fifty?"

And you know what the Lord said? "All right, Abraham. I will accept your counsel."

Think of it, a man down here in this world counseling with God! He is not just a servant. He is a friend. Do you see?

But Abraham was not through. No sooner had God said, "I will spare it for fifty," than he thought, "My, maybe there would not be fifty." So he asked, "What about forty-five? You wouldn't do it just because there were five missing? You wouldn't destroy it, would You?"

The Lord said, "All right Abraham, I like your thought. We will spare it for forty-five."

And that talk between God and Abraham went on until Abraham had things down to where? To ten. What an interview! A man, a poor weak man, so intimate with God, so close with God, that he can discuss things, and God listens. Abraham listens to God. God harkens to Abraham. That is friendship, isn't it? That is fellowship. That is communion.

To such communion, God is calling you, my friend. To such fellowship, you are invited. What a shame to let what somebody else does, or does not do, keep us from such an invitation. What plain folly it is to say by our actions, if not by our words, "Well, Lord, if you get this one to do that, and if You would get somebody else to do this for me, then I think I might love You a little more, or understand You a bit better, or appreciate You more." Why friends, what an utter lack of comprehension such an attitude reveals. Do you agree with me? Yes.

The King of the universe wants me to be His friend. I know He is my friend. He wants me to be His friend. Oh, whatever anybody else does, I am going in and be His friend. What do you say? It will make Him happy. It is what He wants.

"Abraham was called the friend of God" James 2:23.

I want to read what I think is one of the most amazing statements in the revelations that have come to this people. It is found in the last message that the Lord's messenger, Ellen G. White, wrote at the end of her long writing of 70 years. The Lord inspired her to write a letter to a discouraged soul. You will find it now in the book *Testimonies to Ministers*. I want to share with you from this last message from the prophet, this wonderful statement:

"It would not satisfy the heart of the infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 518.

Don't worry if you cannot comprehend that the first time you read it. You can think on that a million years, and there is a lot more that you have not gotten yet.

How much does God want to bless you? As much as He does *Jesus*. How much of God's love does God want you to enjoy? As much as *Jesus* enjoys. How much does He want you to be accepted? As much as *Christ* is accepted. How much does He want you to feel that you are His special friend? Just as much as His Son, *Jesus Christ*, does. If this is not so, friends, then Calvary does not make sense, because God gave His Son with the risk of never seeing Him again. Jesus gave Himself at the risk of failure and eternal loss with the hope of getting you and me back into the circle of friendship. Are you worth that? He says you are. And if He says I am worth it, who am I to say, "Oh, no Lord, I am not worth it." I am not going to call God a liar, friends.

In my deepest heart, secretly, this is what would make me happy, anyway, to find out it was true. Why miss it just because it sounds good? Why turn it down because it sounds too good to be true? It is too good *not* to be true, isn't it?

"It would not satisfy the heart of the infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son" *Ibid*.

I want you to notice where the prophet got the thought that is being enlarged here. It is in Ephesians 1:3. This is what is being commented on in this expression:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" Ephesians 1:3.

The margin says in heavenly *things*.

Notice, God has blessed us in Christ with all spiritual blessings. Nothing is left out. You know when a will is read, and a legacy is being given to the heirs, oh, how people listen. "I wonder what father left me." "I wonder what Uncle George left for me." Well, do you know what the will of the great God is? That you shall have as much as *Christ* has.

I know we can't hold all that. And this is why God is going to give us eternity to enlarge our capacity. A million, million, million years from now, we will just be

entering into the beginning, as it were, of our inheritance. But we will be getting a lot more of it then, than we are tonight because our capacity will increase.

How much can you hold, tonight? What a shame to bring a teaspoon when we could have a quart bucket, or a gallon, or a barrel. How much can you hold? Why stand around timidly, wondering if maybe you could get a few more drops? Why friends, God has a universe of blessings that He longs to pour upon us. And one of the greatest of these blessings is the sense of our friendship with the King of the universe. Not merely that *He* is *our* friend, but that *we* are *His* friends.

Notice, please, Romans 8:16–17. Well, I think we will begin reading with the 15th verse. Listen:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear” Romans 8:15.

Oh, it makes God feel sorry when we are afraid of Him.

“Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” Romans 8:17.

What is a joint-heir? One who gets a share just like the other heirs. You see friends, here in this world we are so inoculated, so saturated with the Devil's idea that the only way I can get more is for somebody else to get less. God never devised any such plan. That was Lucifer's idea. He thought the only way he could get more was to downgrade Christ. He wanted to take something so he could have more. Finally, he even got the idea of getting above God. This is the spirit of the world.

This is what is basically pitiful about this idea of prizes. One of the first prizes I ever won was when I was a little boy, eight years old. I was attending a picnic, a little barefoot boy. Among the other events of the day, they said there was going to be a race for eight-year-old boys, and the prize was a dish of ice cream. It was a hot summer day near Phoenix, Arizona, and it can get hot there.

Well, I lined up with the other little fellows, you know. And I can still see Brother Fred Owen, as he held up his cap and said, “Now, boys, I am going to drop my cap. And when it hits the dirt, you are off. You run up there to a certain mark and run back. The one who gets back first gets the prize.”

Say, we all ran. And I ran with all my heart and strength, and I got it. I got the prize. Of course, the other little fellows, what did they get?

My friends, I thank the Lord I found long ago that that is not real satisfaction. No. I am not interested in that at all—not a bit of it. And I am so glad God didn't wait until I had gray hairs to teach me something better.

When I was in my teens, God began to teach me that there was something better than grabbing something from somebody else, in order for me to get it, that God wasn't that poor, and I didn't need to be. My Father is rich, and I am an heir. He has promised me just as much as *Jesus* has. What more could you want? Why go around trying to grab somebody else's position or money or property or friendship? Why do it?

That is why He says there in the Tenth Commandment:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" Exodus 20:17.

It is not only bad, wicked, but it's foolish. It doesn't make sense, friends. Why on earth covet something that belongs to somebody else, when you have more than you can ever get around, in all eternity that is already yours, bought and paid for with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Why not start in to enjoy that?

Some of you have heard the story of the little dog that was trotting along home, very contented and happy, anticipating what he was going to enjoy as soon as he got home, for he was carrying a bone in his mouth. As he was trotting along he came to a little footbridge across a stream. As he passed over, he chanced to look in the water, and there he saw another dog with another bone—reflection, of course. And he grabbed for it. But, of course, in the process you know what happened, don't you? He lost his own bone. And, of course, he didn't get the other one, either.

Ah friends, think of it! Have you ever tried to grab what somebody else has? Why not enter into the glorious heritage that belongs to us by the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ? Why try to edge in and get somebody else's love, somebody else's friendship, worry whether we have as much honor as somebody else, or the position that somebody else has, or the money that somebody else has?

Friends, there is something sweeter, better, higher, deeper, broader, grander, than anything of that kind. It is to be the friend of God—for God to invite you into His inner counsel and talk with you and let you talk with Him. I know this is so, friends. And I can say honestly from my heart, this satisfies the longing of the soul. I covet no man's position. I covet no man's property or wealth. I have a gold mine, infinite in value. God, the God of the universe, has called me His *friend*. He loves me. He loves to have me with Him. He loves to talk to me and let me talk to Him.

Oh, I feel so little at it, and probably I always will. He is infinite. I am finite. But do you know, even a little bucket can hold the same kind of water that a great big lake does?

What is it they call this lake over here, the other side of the Rockies? Grand lake? Well, it is grand, isn't it? Yes. And it supplies water for quite a bit. Aren't we getting it in the canal here? Yes. You drank some when you turned the faucet on. It

is a great big lake. And if all you can hold is a bucket full, you can take your bucket down there and get it full, but there is plenty left. You don't have to grab somebody else's bucket, turn their bucket over and spill half of it trying to get their bucket in yours. No, no. There is plenty in the lake. God wants you to be filled with all the fullness of God. Yes, there is quite a difference between being a servant and being a friend.

Let's turn now to John 8, and we will notice another wonderful thing about this relationship:

“And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever” John 8:35.

The life and the service of the servant may be transient, uncertain. I go over here to a big factory, and I say to a man, "How long have you been working here?"

“Well, I have been working here for 10 years.”

"Are you sure you are going to work here for the rest of your life?"

“Oh, no.”

“Could they fire you?”

“Oh, yes. They could fire me.”

“Your tenure is uncertain.”

And I want to tell you, friends, there are a lot of people who are with God on that sort of a basis. They feel insecure. Even if they think they are in today, they wonder whether they might get kicked out tomorrow.

God longs to have you be a friend, a son, instead of just a servant.

“The Son abideth ever” John 8:35.

You know, here in this group tonight, many of us are interested in certain branches of the Lord's work. We call those branches “self-supporting work.” I would like to have you think of it this way, friends. Whether we are working in what is called the conference work or self-supporting work, we need to know why we are working. If we are working as servants, we can draw our pay, whether it comes in dollars or tens or hundreds or thousands, but we will never know this other relationship.

Just get this picture, and you will see what I mean. Suppose there is a farm over here in the next valley. There is a man who has a number of hired hands. He has a great big ranch. But he has a son, also. That son has been on that farm ever since he was born. He knows all the broad acres. He knows the cattle. He knows the horses. He knows the tractors.

And one day, a neighbor sees this son as he is handling some of the farm machinery. He sees him on the tractor. He stops him as he makes a round, and he talks to him over the fence.

He says, "Harry, what are you making here on this farm with your father? How much is he paying you? Harry, come and work for me, and I will pay you twice as much."

Will he go? Well, that depends on whether he is a servant or a son. Am I right? That is right. That is what it depends on. I want to tell you something, friends. If there is any amount of money that would get you to move from the job you have to some other job, then you are missing half your life. In fact, you are missing more than that. Well, I won't try to express it mathematically, how much of your life you are missing. Oh, listen. There is something more wonderful to work for than a servant's wage. It is the fellowship of a son with his father, a friend with a friend.

But you know, the son has to take the consequence of that because come a bad year, the crops aren't quite so plentiful, the servants have to be paid just as much as if there was a good crop, don't they? But the son and the father have to tighten the belt a bit, right? And does the son go to bed and think, "I don't know. I think I'll get moving. I know where I can get a lot more money than I am getting here. Why sure, that's no problem."

Oh, I repeat, it is a wonderful thing to be a son, to be a friend. Is that your experience? If you have it, there is nothing that can bribe you, nothing that can entice you, nothing that can allure you. And when I say that, I do not mean, and of course, you know I don't mean that a man is to stay in one bit of geography all his life. That is not the point. Wherever God sends me, that is where I want to go. Wherever God places me, that is where I want to be. My point is, money has nothing to do with it. Remuneration has nothing to do with it if I am a son. If I am a servant, yes, I will sell my talents, my time, to the highest bidder. Why shouldn't I? If what I want is \$10,000 a year, and if somebody will pay it to me, why not go there? And when I have been there a little while, if somebody else offers me \$20,000, why not go on where the pastures are greener? Doesn't that add up? Doesn't that make sense? Sure. But if that isn't what I am interested in, if I have a father that loves me and that I love, and I am filling a place on his team that nobody else can fill, and shall I put it very simply, he just can't get along without me, I am not going to let him down. Would you? Oh, no, I am not going to let Him down. He wants me. He needs me. He needs my counsel. That is what He says. He needs my love, that is what He needs. It isn't my wisdom. Oh, no. But He needs my love, my understanding, my appreciation.

Abraham believed God. Do you believe God? When God tells you that He loves you, do you say, "Oh, Lord, I believe You, I know You love me," or do you say, "Oh, I wish I could feel it"?

Feel it? What does feeling have to do with it, friends? It is a fact, bless the Lord, Jesus is your elder Brother. His Father is your father. He is your friend. You can be His friend. Will you do it? Will you enter into that fellowship with Jesus?

How is it done? Well, as we studied yesterday morning about Enoch walking with God. The first thing is to make contact. The second thing is to keep it. That is all there is to it. Make contact and keep it. In the language of our lesson tonight, it is this: acknowledge the relationship that God has made possible through the gift and sacrifice of Jesus, and keep acknowledging it. Keep believing what God says, that He is your friend, and that you are His. Talk to Him as a friend.

Now I wish we could turn in our hymnals to 531. See if you don't like this one:

I've found a Friend; oh, such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him:
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.

And 'round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever

Note that second stanza:

I've found a Friend; oh, such a Friend!
He bled, He died to save me.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down
his life for His friends. Ye are my friends... From now on
I call you not servants... but friends" John 15:13–15.

Oh, what a friend He is, to lay down His life for us! Oh, let's sing it with new meaning and new appreciation.

I've found a Friend; oh, such a Friend!
He bled, He died to save me;
And not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me.

Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver;
My heart, my strength, my life, my all
Are His, and His forever.

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