



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

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You've Got a Friend in Me

Three Proverbs About Friendship

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

[Old Friendship Pictures]

I want to show you some pictures. They are old pictures of friends, actually. Male friends that will look a little bit odd to you. Here's the first one. You might find it odd. These are actually photos that were taken. So, these gentlemen who were, years ago, decided that they were going to have their pictures taken. They decided which poses they were going to choose. In this particular case, instead of two chairs, one of the guys said to the other guy, "you know, I've got a big lap, so you just plop her down right here, and we will take this picture here." Here's another one. These guys stood together and they decided they would hold hands. With one hand on the hip. Another one. I just wanted you to notice how many times these men are holding hands. These are all sorts of different times and places. This one guy in the back is missing out on all the hand holding and the shoulder touching. And this next one. These guys got together and couldn't help themselves but, you know, "here you sit down here and I'll put my legs around here" [laughing]. Was that the last one? Yeah. So listen, if I showed those pictures to you-- you know obviously I'm showing them today and every one of us is really kind of-- it's uncomfortable. Especially all the guys in the room are feeling like, "I'm not sure if I had a choice to make about whether or not I wanted my friends to take a picture of me, like we're going to do selfies later, I'm not sure those are the poses we are going to choose. For fear that someone might get the wrong idea regarding your sexuality or something like that. We live in a day, in fact, these days where anytime that any man admits his love for a male friend, he is thought to be gay. It's not always been like that, in fact I would say it's not like that in most parts of the world. I had a friend named Hero. He was from Japan. We played tennis together when I was in highschool and Hero and I, when we would play tennis together, we became very close and friendly with each other, and he would sit on the buses in high school, right? He'd sit on the bus sitting next to me, and he, when he would sit next to me, would rub my back, which was always really awkward as a, you know, white North American kid thinking "what are you doing?" But this was just the way that he and his culture, that men showed affection for another and it was very much part of the way that they do things. You can still go to parts of the world today where that's certainly is the case. Some men who move here from other parts of the world just look at North American men and think, "do you guys not love your friends at all? Do you not care? Because you never say anything about it. You certainly don't show any kind of affection toward him."

**[1630 Puritan John Winthrop's letter to his friend he left behind in England]**

In ages past, our fore-bearers, and by that I mean people from England, okay? Our fore-bearers actually did show that kind of affection. Especially man in 1630, a puritan named John Winthrop, who was leaving England and he was going to go to the New World to be part of the American Colonies and he had to leave behind his wife and his family and he had to leave behind several of his dear friends. He wrote, of course, to his wife and his family. When he wrote to his friend, this is the actual letter that he wrote. Ready?

"I loved you truly before I could think that you took any notice of me. But now I embrace you and rest in your love and delight to solace my first thoughts in those sweet affections of so dear a friend. Whenever I think about you just my heart overflows. The apprehension of your love and worth together, has overcome my heart and removed the veil of modesty. I'm not going to hide it anymore what I feel about you. That I must tell you, that my soul is knit to you as the soul of Jonathan to David. Were I now with you, I should - ready for this - bedew that sweet bosom with tears of affection."

Right? A lot of bedewed bosoms around, right? [laughter]. You get the idea. Like, in other words, if I were bedewed, right? I'm going to cry so many tears, and I'm going to hug you so tightly that they are going to drip down on your chest because of how much I miss you. There is nothing homosexual about what these guys were writing. They were just good friends. This is the way that friendship used to be described. Not so much now, right? We aren't as flowery toward our friends as they were, but we do feel what they felt. When you think about your dearest friends, I promise you that bedewing might be what happens. Friends matter. They might matter the most. Yes, your family is important, absolutely, but you're stuck with them, right? You're thrust into them by the province of God, but your friends you get to choose. So they matter.

[Cicero Quote]

Cicero said it really well. He was one of the first Greek Philosophers, he said that, *friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the value of which the people are all agreed*. I don't care about your politics and how much difference of opinion you have with other people in this room, I can guarantee you that if we-- we all agree on the value of our friends. I have never in my life preached a sermon about friendship. I'm shocked at that because the Bible talks about it a lot. Particularly the book of Proverbs has lots and lots of proverbs talking about what the nature of friendship is, and of course the Bible is going to talk about it, I mean friendship is a major portion of what we do in our lives, yeah? So the scriptures have descriptions of what good friends look like. David and Jonathan are the kinds of friends who share that kind of sweet affection with one another. So here's what I want to do in the next few minutes. I want to talk about what marks a true friend. I'm going to point out three Proverbs to you, so kind of three sermons in one. You're welcome. Right? So, three Proverbs and we're going to learn three things about what a true friend is. Number one: A True Friend Conceals. Number two: A True Friend Wounds. And number three: A True Friend Remains. A true friend conceals, wounds, and remains.



[Outline - What marks a true Friend

1. A true friend conceals
2. A true friend wounds
3. A true friend remains]

SERMON 1 - A True Friend Conceals. Proverbs 17:9

Remember, these are all around just Proverbs around friendships. The first one is Proverbs 17:9. Here's what it says:

"Whoever would foster love covers over an offense. But whoever repeats the matter, separates close friends."

What does it mean to cover over an offence?

The language there, in fact, the word cover-up is used in the Hebrew to cover up an offence. We're comfortable and quite aware of that language, right? If there's a politician who's in office and they've done something despicable, right? Like spy on one of their other politicians in a hotel in Washington, they then are caught and they perform what's called a cover-up. Cover-up for them means that they don't want their-- they know the truth, there are some people who know the truth, but they don't want anyone else to know the truth. Ladies, you know what cover-up is, yeah? You wear it all the time. I have a blemish, okay? So most of the women I know wear the cover up, but apparently some of you don't, by response. Some ladies are like "yeah, okay, I do." But are the rest of you just not aware? Yeah, you're just covering it up. [laughter] So, right, you wear cover up. So you have a blemish, and you're like "well I-- the truth about my face in this particular moment is that there is a large pimple on it, but I don't want anyone else to know that, so I use the cover up to make sure the truth about my face is not known publicly by others. We understand what cover-ups are. You don't want others to know about the truth. So, listen, to cover over an offence, or to cover up an offence, this passage says, whoever would foster love covers over an offence. To do that, is to avoid talking to third parties about offences our friends do to us or to others. You follow that? You choose deliberately not to speak to anyone else about the truth about your friend, which might show them in a light that is not as favourable as their facebook account. You cover over an offence. So your friend does something really bad to you and you're really mad. Very offended by what they did. Maybe they come and they apologize a little bit later or whatever, but they've done this act to you. Same day you're somewhere else, a little bit later on, you're talking to another friend and there's this moment. You know the moment. Where you're talking to that friend and your mind is racing back, because you-- I mean you want to talk about things and you are tired of talking about the internet and all of the things that are going wrong in the world, so you have a choice in this moment, to talk about the offence that your other friend did to you.

THE POINT: Friends forget your indiscretions. They know them, but they don't share them. True friends know the real you, but happily endorse "Facebook you" to others.

What this Proverb is saying is that this true friend, the one that wants to foster love, will keep their mouth shut. They won't repeat the matter because repeating the matter will separate the friendship. Friends forget your indiscretions, that they know your indiscretions, alright, so good friends know you better than they know anyone else knows you, but you-- good friends don't share your indiscretions.



They know the real you, but they happily endorse the facebook you to others. Have you ever watch the-- you know Access Hollywood? These show? When I was a kid I think it was Entertainment Tonight. I don't even know if that's on anymore. Does anyone watch T.V anymore? [laughter] Okay, so Entertainment Tonight was this show where they covered all the celebrities and stuff and they were always really excited, the hosts of the show were really excited when they could talk to somebody who was a good friend of one of the celebrities. And inevitably, the person they talked to behind the scenes, give them the behind the scenes look at Beyonce and Beyonce's friend will come along and say "well you know, behind the scenes, Beyonce is actually kind of mean. She did this and this and this and this to me and this other person, and actually..."

I've watched these shows before and I've thought to myself, "Man, I don't want any friends like that." I don't want somebody who's a friend, who knows me really well, who's going to go now onto the television and report to everyone, for their own self-serving purposes, all the things that are wrong with me. Because yes, there are things wrong with me, but good friends just don't report it. They cover over offences. Sometimes I've heard people talk about their kids this way. I'll mention something about their kids to them that's, "Hey, your kids are really positive." Sometimes people say that to me about my children. I mean it's fleeting, when they are positive, but there is occasion that they will say about my kids-- I'm kidding by the way, my kids are perfect [laughter]. So, they'll say to me, "You know, your son is really delightful, your son is really great," and you know what I don't say? "You should be in my house from time to time, because I would not use the word delightful for what he does in my"-- no, of course you don't, you know what you say in response to that? "Yes, he is. He's delightful. I love him a lot." What's the truth about him? Well, at times he's delightful and other times he doesn't clean up his room, but I'm not going to report that to everybody in the world. Except now [laughter]. There's a lot, but I love him. And he's not going to report the truth about me all the time either. Not to everyone and that's because he loves me and he wants to cover over offence-- even if I offended him, and I have, several times, he doesn't go out and report it to everybody, because he loves me. Those who want to foster love cover over offences. But whoever repeats the matter, separates close friends.

How do you talk about your friends to others? Are you a good friend? Do you guard their indiscretions?

"I'd be lying if I didn't share with--" really? Come on. You're going to die old and alone. Sometimes my daughter plays this game on the X-box called Just Dance. Just Dance is a great game. Its basically-- they show on the screen some people dancing to some songs and you have to copy their movements, right? And so my daughter always tries to rope me into it and I'm like, "no, my foot hurts", you know? But I will sit there and I always want her to rope my wife into it because Jeannie is a gamer. She will always do this, and so she will get up and start dancing. What I do when Jeannie starts dancing, is I'll pull out my phone and I quietly, from my lap, video the dancing. She doesn't know this, most of the time, until recently she saw me doing this and she stopped the dancing, came over to me quietly, looked me dead in the eyes, with her hands on my shoulders, looked me dead in the eyes and said, "If you want a divorce, you'll share that" [laughter]. Right? Now she didn't need to say that to me. I'm not going to share it. I'm going to watch it in my old age and just love it. Just delight in my wife. But the reason I don't share things like that with instagram or the world is that obviously I love my wife. I choose not to share it because I love her.



If you want to foster love with your friends, with your spouse, there are certain things that you keep quiet.

You don't share with other people. Especially their offences against you and against third parties. Yes, they're true, but you know what? You don't need to share it with everyone in the world. You don't need to repeat matters. It's what a good friend looks like.

SERMON 2 - A True Friend Wounds. Proverbs 27:6,

"Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses."

Okay, so here's the reason I'm sitting and not standing in front of you today. I don't really love sitting on this stool, but my right foot hurts an awful lot. I woke up two days ago and my right foot had inflated like a balloon. I didn't know why. I thought maybe I had turned-- I couldn't remember turning my ankle, I couldn't remember doing anything at all, but I'm 44, so this stuff just happens now. So I decided I'll just let it go. Came to work that day. Hurt worse. Thought overnight I want-- wife is saying, "go to the doctor, go to the doctor." "no, no. I am a doctor" [laughter]. So I didn't go to the doctor. The next day, all day long it was just worse and worse, and finally I took my shoe and sock off and it had gotten really, really big. So, okay, go to the doctor. He has a look at it and says, "Oh dear, you need to be in the hospital immediately and you need to get an IV, which I currently have in my arm, and I'm leaving to go to the hospital after here to get some more antibiotics. So, I go to the hospital and I'm sitting there in the hospital, and the nurse comes in, and she's young and she's really kind, and she's at the end of her shift I think, so she's happy to talk to me for a little bit. But she's got to put the IV in and she starts complaining about my veins and I said, "well", and she said, "where are your veins?" I said, "hidden under all the fat" [laughter]. So, she's like, "okay, well." She whacked my arm a few times, finally she takes this needle, she pokes. "Yeah, that didn't--we're going to do that again." Pokes. This time she starts, like, swimming around in there. She's like, "are you okay?" "oh yeah, I'm great" [laughter]. She didn't get one, the next nurse comes in, she gets one after a couple tries and then the last nurse, when I'm leaving, pulls it out and then after pulling it out says, "oh, oops, I forgot you needed to keep that in. Well, they'll do it again tomorrow." My arms like, "Yeah, that's great. I'm looking forward to tomorrow" [laughter]. So, this morning I go back, she fishes around a little bit. She misses three or four times and then she pokes it in.

Is there ever a time when someone wounding you would be a good thing?

Now, while I'm sitting there being stabbed, okay, I was thinking to myself - this is an interesting occasion because I'm allowing someone to stab me. This is the only setting in which I will allow someone to take sharp implements and poke them in my body. And yet I do it. I willingly receive the wound from these people because I know that their intent and goal for me is ultimately good. Like, I don't want a balloon foot any longer. I don't want to die of cellulitis, which killed people years ago, which is not encouraging to hear from the doctor, but anyway, I don't want to die from this, so I recognize that I am not in a perfect state of health in this present moment and so I'm going to have to receive a wound to correct my lack of perfection. A fool would sit there in that chair and say, "no, don't you dare wound



me, everything is just fine.” No, everything's not fine. I trust the nurse because her goal is my good. A wound is only truly bad when the one inflicting it has no good goal for it.

THE POINT: A true friend is one who wounds you for your good. The good nurse is that way. A poor friend is one that never seeks to correct, but only blows kisses that keep you in error. Isn't that what it says? Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy, not a friend, an enemy multiplies kisses. “Oh, you're so great and wonderful. [inaudible] perfect in every way.” Now listen, I am fully cognizant at this point, that that Proverb is the dead opposite to what our culture is saying, because what our culture is currently telling us, is that true friends are those who blow all the kisses that you need and they never wound. And you know why they never wound? Because you're never wrong. There's nothing about you that requires fixing. Haters say that. Enemies say that. True friends are the ones who affirm. “You're wonderful.” You struggle to believe this Proverb because our society tells us to think that everything about ourselves is perfect just how it is.

Quote from Jean Twenge, *Generation Me*

Jean Twenge wrote this wonderful book called *Generation Me*. It's about 10 years old now. It's a description of how the culture has gotten kind of to where it is when it comes to these issues and especially talks a lot about why is it we focus so much on the self these days. As a way of illustrating that, she writes these words, she says,

“we speak the language of the self as our native tongue. So much of the common sense advice that's given these days includes some variation on self. So, you're worried about how to act in a social situation? Just be yourself. What's the good thing about your alcoholism/drug addiction/murder conviction? “Well, I learned a lot about myself.” Concerned about your performance? Believe in yourself. Often followed by, “and anything is possible”. Should you buy the new pair of shoes or get the nose ring? Yes! Express yourself. Why should you leave the unfulfilling relationship/quit the boring job/tell off your mother-in-law? Well, you have to respect yourself. Confused about the best time to date or get married? Well, you have to love yourself before you can love someone else. Should you express your opinion? Yes! Stand up for yourself.”

All of these words, of course, and phrases are just-- this is just the language that we speak. This is her point. In this book she ends up pointing out that, listen, if you recoil or are frustrated at all by me pointing out problems, perhaps with those lines, maybe you've bought into the Kool-aid a little more than you thought. The goal of your life is not necessarily to indorse yourself and everything about you. That's fundamentally opposite from what scriptures say. You know what you're supposed to do if you follow Jesus? Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. The Christian church is saying that there's something fundamentally flawed about you, that is your a sinner and you need a saviour. You need someone who is going to redeem you and then form you from what you are into the perfect magnificent trophy of God's grace, that he intended for you all along. But the culture's pushing back against that saying, “No, you don't need to be formed because you already are magnificent in every single way. Don't let anyone ever tell you any different. You've got to respect yourself, you know.”



She continues in her book with this little illustration. She says, *“One Austin Texas father was startled to see his five year old daughter wearing a shirt that announced ‘I’m lovable and capable.’ All of the kindergarteners, he learned, recited this phrase before class and they all wore this shirt to school on Fridays. Okay, so they are all wearing “I’m lovable and capable” shirts. Professing what’s really true about them. It seemed the school started a bit too young, however, because the child then asked, “daddy, all the kids are wondering what ‘capable’ means.”*

Some of you will get that later. These jokes are better if I don’t have to explain them. If children have a shirt that says “capable” on it and they have to ask what “capable” means, it usually means they are not capable of understanding the word capable.

If I’m capable-- this is my point here, is that if I’m capable in all ways, then a true friend affirms my capability, don’t they? I mean, that’s what’s true about me. Don’t you dare tell me that I’m incapable. A good friend doesn’t correct me. He’s a hater. He’s an enemy if he does. The enemies correct you. Enemies wound you. If there’s nothing wrong with you. You see how it’s flipped? And yet, you and I, honestly, when you look at this, you know, you know that **regardless of how our society teaches us to reject correction, we know the Proverb is right**. Like, you instinctively know it. You know you need correction. You can try to tell yourself all you want in the mirror that you’re perfect, but you know you’re not. You know you’re an unfinished article. No, you shouldn’t be standing in the mirror saying, “You’re rubbish, you’re horrible.” No, of course not, but there are things about you that need to be corrected. You’re a sinner in need of a Saviour.

Better is open rebuke than hidden love

Can you imagine a coach with a little kid on third base, tries to field the ball and he keeps missing it and the coach just sits there on the bench and he doesn’t do anything. He just puts his-- gets a stool and sits back and chews his big-league chew and reads his iPhone. Is this coach loving the third baseman? Is he seeking the ultimate good of the third baseman? Of course he’s not seeking his ultimate good. The coach who loves the third baseman and seeks his good in baseball will get out there and teach him how to do it differently. He will correct him. He will not blow multiple kisses his way. In fact, the Proverb that immediately precedes this one says, *better is open rebuke than hidden love*. In other words, I’d rather have you rebuke me than say nothing, because saying nothing is just hateful. It’s better, open rebuke, than hidden love.

THE POINT: A true friend is marked by their willingness to wound you for your good.

I know that personally. I have a good friend whose father got into a mess of trouble not that long ago. His father got addicted to pain medication and he was in the hospital for quite a while and had the pain medication, so prescription drugs became part of what he did. He started going back, he had some doctor friends and they would write him prescriptions for a little while until they realized, “Oh, I think there’s a problem here,” and then he started getting illicit drugs on the street. Christian man, raised his family as Christians, but just started going down this track and couldn’t control his addiction. He had one son. His one son is a pastor, my friend, and my friend had to make a decision. “What do we do here.” His dad didn’t want to necessarily go on-- he knew there was a problem but he didn’t actually want to go into any kind of rehab. He just wanted his son to enable him, over and over and over again.



So my friend was with him a little bit through the time and talking back and forth. He lives in another place. He had to make one of the hardest decisions he's ever had to make in his life and that was that he had to go and tell his father that he couldn't stay in the home with his three daughters, with his three grandchildren. Instead, he had to go and take him to a facility downtown because he had to draw a line in the sand and say, "Look, you're not well." So the hardest thing he's ever had to do, my friend, was to drive downtown with his father, in the car, weeping, and dropping his dad off downtown.

He told me that. He said, "Jeff, you can judge if you want for that, but I-- like it was the only way was drawing a hard line trying to help my dad." Well, one thing led to another and his father was eventually on the streets, actually, for about a week and a half. His father finally hit rock-bottom and ended up going to the rehab. When my friend got the phone call from his dad, that he had reached rock-bottom, he was there, he picked him up and he took him to rehab. About six months later he received a letter from his dad and here's what it read,

Right now, son, I'm closer to God than I have ever been and it's because of you and the hard decisions that you had to make. You saved my life. If it wasn't for your tough line, I wouldn't be where I am. I love you simply for who you are, but my love has even increased because of your faithfulness to God. Thank you son, you saved your dad and now I'm ready to be what God created me to be. I love you.

That's what a true friend looks like, though, right? Someone who's willing to sometimes make the hard decisions for the long-term good of their buddy. And it might be hard. by the way, isn't this what Jesus does for us? Is it not? I mean, Jesus receives us as we are but He will not permit us to stay there. He's a great surgeon and He's a good nurse, Jesus, with His needles, poking away, realizing that, "Listen, you need some fixing and I am the right surgeon to get the job done. And I will fix you. I will fix what's wrong with you. It's going to require a little bit of pain on the front end, yes, absolutely, but in the long run I am going to present you holy, blameless, before my father in glory." Praise God he does this. Praise God he's a friend like that. Are you?

SERMON 3 - A True Friend Remains. Proverbs 17:17

"A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for a time of adversity. "

This is quite understandable, right? I mean, true friends stick by you no matter the difficulty of the circumstance. They don't run off when things get hard, in fact, usually, if I ask you, "Can you describe for me the truest friends you've ever had? You will describe the ones who stuck by your side in the dark moments, who were there when you went to the doctor. Not the ones that couldn't be bothered, but those ones, who were willing to see times of adversity as the reason for which they were born. That no matter what happens, I know that God has called me to be with my friend. That's a true friend. That kind of remaining. This is the way that Jonathan was for David.

I had a friend like this when I was in middle school. One of the hardest things that ever happened to me in my life was that I went to a middle school of about 700-800 kids, and in grade eight I had one, who I



thought was a friend, who decided that he would not-- we went on holidays together and he decided that he would not conceal our indiscretions, but instead decided to talk about me to other people of things I had done on this trip. Not bad things, by any means, but you know, we had screwed around, and egged some buildings and stuff, but then he started adding on top of those things, other things he said about me that weren't true, that were actually quite despicable. So he started sharing these rumours, and of course he got a lot of attention about this, and he shared them in a few other places, and eventually the whole school knew. One person told the next, told the next, told the next. I went into a second period class and I came out for a third period and I walked down the hall, and everyone - grade eight - everyone in our school was looking at me and snickering, and I had no idea why. I stood at my locker and I had one guy stand by my locker and just smile and shake his head, and then he started to repeat some of the rumours that he had heard and I said, "What? Where did you hear that?" and he recounted that so-and-so had said so-and-so and they had heard it from so-and-so, and then next thing I was, you know, grade eight, blushing, and I had to run down to the office and I called my mom, "Mom, you need to come get me right away." Which of course is the wrong thing to do because it just, you know, endorses in everyone's mind that you're the kind of guy that these things are true about. I remember being home that day thinking to myself, "How in the world am I going to get through these next few months of my life?" Having people swirled, my whole community was blown up. I had friends, who I thought were friends, sharing these stories that weren't true. I showed up the next day at school. Nobody wanted to talk to me. Not a single person was with me. I ate lunch alone. People were inviting me to come out-- it snowed that day of course. People invited me to come out so they could throw snowballs at me. They labeled me with different labels. It's a good thing facebook wasn't around, and instagram. I would have been one of those kids that ends up killing themselves.

I was so devastated by this entire thing, but there was one guy, Mark, who when he heard these things he would repeat back to people, "That's not true of the Jeff I know, and I know him well, we've been friends for years. It's not true." He's the only person who came up and stood next to me and was willing to talk to me during that time. I ended up eating my lunch with Mark. And people would make fun of Mark for hanging out with me, but day after day, even when he had money to go buy lunch at the school cafeteria, he would sit down next to me and make sure I was alright before he left. **A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for a time of adversity.**

[Charles Spurgeon Quote]

Charles Spurgeon said it well, he said, "Fidelity is an absolute necessity in a true friend. We cannot rejoice in men unless they will stand faithful to us." Spurgeon himself told us a story of these guys who were hiking through the wilderness in the Scottish Highlands, and a great storm came up and as they walked through the Scottish Highlands and this storm was coming down and the snow started to fall, they were not prepared for it, and they were so far away from anywhere that would keep them safe, that one by one they started to drop like flies. Dying in the snow. One man saw his friend, who he'd walked with for all this time, dying on the ground behind him, and he turned around and he picked that man up and he put him on his shoulders, and he started to walk the rest of the way, trying to get his friend to safety. The exertion that he put forth in order to do that actually killed the one who was carrying the other, but the warmth of the body of the one who had done the carrying and now had died, kept the one



who was carried alive. And he woke up the next morning, stood up to his feet and walked to safety. What a friend.

A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for a time of adversity. You know, there's another Proverb that I wanted to share that actually summarizes this even better. Proverbs 18:24, *One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin.* But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother, right? There is a friend who sticks closer than any brother. That's a phrase that's used, actually, of Jesus in the New Testament, and what's beautiful about friendship, quite honestly, is that Jesus is kind of held up as the embodiment of the best kind of friend you could possibly have. And listen, if you are a Christian, you've believed upon Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation, you know this to be true. When you hear the phrase, "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother," your heart sings, you say, "Yes, I know Jesus to be true."

I'm going to read Charles Spurgeon's comments on that verse to you as we finish here. Just to press into you the truth that Jesus is such a friend. *Will you not, each of you, who has Jesus as a friend, at once give your verdict? That his is neither more, nor less than unexaggerated truth, this fact that there's a friend that sticks closer than any brother, and that Jesus is him. He loved you before all words were made. Before the wing of angel had flapped, and before creation had struggled from the nothingness. God has set his heart upon all his children. And since that time, has He once turned aside? Once changed? No, you who have tasted of his love and know his grace, must testify that He has been as certain friend in uncertain circumstances. You have laughed at Him. You've despised His word. Did He then forsake you? No! He arrested you, rather, by his grace. He humbled you. He made you repent. He brought you to his feet and He forgave all your sins. Since then, since that moment, has He left you? You've often left Him, but has He ever left you? You have had many trials and troubles. Has He ever deserted you? Has He ever turned away His heart? No, child of God. It is your solemn duty to say 'no' and bear witness to His faithfulness. You have been in severe afflictions and dangerous circumstances. Did your friend desert you then? Has there ever been a moment where you could say "Master, you've betrayed me. Could you once, in your blackest hour, could you dare to impugn His fidelity? And do you fear that He will yet forsake you? Just ask those bright ones who have already gone on and stand before His throne. They will answer 'no' through all the troubles in life. In all the bitterness of death. In all the agonies of our expiring moments He has been with us. He is truly a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

Aren't you happy that you have a friend like that? It occurs to me that some of you don't. Man, you're missing out! I'm just going to tell you, honestly, if you don't have a friend who is going to stick with you through thick and thin, and the truth is that everyone in their last moments has to face them alone, except those who've believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, because He will never leave nor forsake you. He will walk you through all of that. If you're a Christian here, aren't you thankful that that's the way He acts? And if you're not, man, you should probably think seriously about why not. His freindship is offered free of charge. It's probably about time that you just received it.