



# Come and See!

May 6, 2018

## The Word...

"This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.  
No one has greater love than this,  
to lay down one's life for one's friends.  
You are my friends if you do what I command you.  
I no longer call you slaves,  
because a slave does not know what his master is doing.  
I have called you friends,  
because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.  
It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you  
and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain..."  
*(from Jn 15:9-17)*

## Pondering the Word...

The word "friend" has gone through quite a transition in the past decade or so. First, the noun has morphed into a verb, as in, "I'm going to 'friend' her on Facebook!" It has also lost a lot of its real significance, as has the word "follower." "BFF" (Best Friend Forever) is a title whose holder can change at a moment's notice. A person can choose to friend and follow hundreds of people if they want. It's no wonder, as a society, we are so distracted and confused, with opinions and allegiances that change by the day!

When Jesus says to us, "You are my friends," or "Come, follow me," he clearly doesn't mean it in the social media sense of the words. He means it as his Word, his command to love. This is not some casual, no-strings-attached type of relationship he calls us to, but one that will test and challenge us; one that is to bear fruit that will remain, not to be blocked or forgotten when the going gets tough.

"I have called you as friends," says the Lord. Are you willing to accept his invitation?

## Living the Word...

How do you define a good friendship? It's worth considering when thinking about your relationship with Jesus. If you think good friends are there when you need them and not when you don't, then you probably think about Jesus that way. Unfortunately, a lot of people have a kind of self-centered "friendship" with God, or they act as God's friends to win approval or derive some other benefit for themselves.

A true friendship calls for mutual comfort and support in times of need, of course, but also for vulnerability, candor, and a willingness to challenge or question. It's opening up and sharing the sorrows and joys of your life, just as Jesus did with his friends. He invites us to that same kind of relationship and to share his joys and sufferings as well.

Pray about this. Write down what a true friendship with Jesus would look like for you. Then ask Jesus to do the same for you. Ask him what kind of friend he'd like you to be. (A great book about being friends with God is, *A Friendship Like No Other*, by William Barry, S.J.)

Personal Reflections and Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**May 7:** *We sat and spoke with the women who had gathered there...Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention...(Acts 16:11-15)*

Lydia is likely a Gentile widow and a successful businesswoman. While she's probably not a Jewish convert, she does worship the one, true God. But the most important thing about Lydia? She is willing to listen. When it comes to the call of the Spirit, it is the most important thing we can do as well. Listening is paradoxical. It is an active state of being receptive, withholding judgement, just being open to whatever God has in store. The next time you sit in prayer, say these six words and no others: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

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**May 8:** *"But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." (Jn 16:5-11)*

Adapted from Strong's Greek Concordance: "*paráklētos* (*pará*, 'from close-beside' and *kaléō*, 'make a call') – an advocate who makes the right judgment-call because he is close enough to the situation; an advocate, intercessor, a consoler, comforter, helper." What an amazing gift Christ Jesus gives to us! A Spirit closer than the air we breathe; a source of wisdom and comfort; an intercessor that knows and advocates for our deepest needs. Connect today with the Spirit of Jesus that dwells in and all around us!

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**May 9:** *"God ...made from one the whole human race...so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us." (Acts 17:15, 22-18:1)*

Have you ever experienced what Paul is talking about here? A time when God was tantalizingly near but still out of reach; or conversely, have you felt the absence of God? Thomas Merton writes, "*God, who is everywhere, never leaves us. Yet..., if we do not know God well, we do not realize that he may be more present to us when he is absent than when he is present.*" God is not far from any one of us. We, by our anxiety and striving, keep God at a distance. We don't allow ourselves to be still and let God in. If God seems absent, take a deep breath, relax, and let go of your fears. Be patient. Do this over and over and eventually, when you least expect it, you will find God right there within you.

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**May 10:** *Paul...met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, [and] his wife Priscilla...he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. (Acts 18:1-8)*

I imagine someone has tracked Paul's travels around the Roman Empire and how many miles he logged in service of the Lord. But there were times he settled in--to rest, but also to earn his keep. Here he stays with fellow tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla, to assist them as they establish themselves in Corinth. It's likely the Apostles maintained their trades in order to support themselves and their families. But everything they did, all aspects of their lives, were focused on one thing: building the Kingdom of God. As we go about our daily lives—in our workplaces, homes, schools, communities—we too are called to keep focus on the Kingdom. Challenge yourself: how will you build God's Kingdom in every place and situation you encounter today?

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**May 11:** *"But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you." (Jn 16: 20-23)* There's just two weeks left in the Easter season, but there is no one and no thing that can take away our joy of the resurrected Christ. Hold onto that joy. Start each day remembering his promise: "I will see you again."

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**May 12:** *After [Apollos'] arrival [in Ephesus], he gave great assistance to those who had come to believe through grace. (Acts 18:23-28)*

The Gentiles and Jews in Ephesus have been granted faith in Jesus by the grace of the Holy Spirit, delivered through the channel of Paul's preaching. But Paul had to move on, and so the new believers are left on their own without much in the way of scholarly support. You can imagine great, heated debates in the synagogues and town squares. And you can also imagine the converts' great relief when the scripture scholar Apollos shows up with his knowledge and eloquence, even if his understanding of the Way is a bit lacking! Do you have a source for scripture study? Though we hope our actions will speak for what we believe, it's nice to have some support if we are challenged. Consider getting a study Bible that can help elucidate your faith.