

Introduction:

- Review.
 - God encounters/YHEWH. The encounter with God leads to a place of faith. We put our trust in a God who is so much bigger than we are that he has to make covenant with us so that we can arrive at a place of trust in him. Through trust over time a friendship is built with God.
 - Last week we looked at how those friendships are built: through trust over time, communication, discovery (God is looking for loyal people and we discover more about Him as we read the Word), journey...walking with God in all aspects/circumstances of life.
- God desires our friendship. This is what makes friendship with God possible. His desire for friendship was the place in His heart where we were conceived. Our quest and destiny in life should be to find it again.
- Friendship defines the highest level of relationship. It is the highest level because of what friendship means. It is far stronger than a servant. Sonship that embraces friendship is most powerful!
- One of the major products of friendship is the sharing of hearts. And this sharing of hearts can lead to profound actions that have eternal impact. One of those major by products is intercession.

1. Friendship Captures a Heart

- a. God initiates friendship with man. He wants relationship with His children. Sonship with friendship is powerful! Luke 15 the Father runs to the younger son. The father goes to the older son. It is the father who initiating the building of friendship with His sons.
 - i. God initiated the relationship with Abram. Calls him out of the Chaldes.
 - ii. God initiated the relationship with Moses. Burning bush.
 - iii. These God encounters produced in the heart of these men something that began to go very deep into them. God genuinely loves me! God genuinely loves people. I am talking about a friendship that captures the heart. Real friendship captures and holds the heart of that friend. God does that to us. But what we are going to see tonight is that this friendship also goes deep into man and elicits a powerful response from that man as well, regarding His friend, God.
- b. He who has been forgiven much loves much. When one realizes that he have been given what he do not deserve humility enters the heart.
 - i. *“I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”* (Luke 7:47, NLT)
 1. Her sins are many and she has been forgiven.
 2. Vs. 50 *“Your faith has saved you.”* Note: the impact that love has had upon the heart...Faith!
 - ii. Jesus is betrayed by Peter, who he forewarns that he was going to be tested. But when you return strengthen the brethren. Jesus later says to him *“Feed my sheep.”* Jn 21
- c. A heart captured in friendship produces good fruit over time.
 - i. *“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.”* (John 15:13–15, NLT)
 - ii. What a move on Jesus part to continue to pull these disciples into God’s eternal plan. Friendship is doing this. God initiating a friendship with man!
 - iii. Abraham and Moses encountered Yahweh! It was an incredible encounter! From that point on they were filled with faith in this God they encountered. That faith produced in them righteousness that comes only by faith. We see one man succeed in obedience and prevail. Another man, Moses failed in obedience yet we see him with Jesus on the mount of

transfiguration. Point: Righteousness comes by faith not by works. And this faith produced something powerful in each man. Intercession.

2. Friendship Produced Intercession

- a. "The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart..." (1 Sam. 13:14)
- b. "'*Should I hide my plan from Abraham?*'" *the Lord asked.*" (Genesis 18:17, NLT) This sounds like Jn 15:15, Jesus talking to His friends. God is letting Abraham in on his plan.
 - i. vs 20 and 21 Jesus is going to visit Sodom and Gomorrah to see if it is as wicked as He hears. Somehow it is understood by Abraham that He is going to destroy these two towns.
 - ii. The bargaining begins. 50, 45, 40, 35, 20, 10! (Gen 19:17 Lot, his wife and two daughters are saved.)
 - iii. Abraham interceded for the cities and for his nephew Lot and his family. Abraham stood up for the humanity under judgment in these cities and for his nephew.
 - iv. I am wanting us to see that Abraham was carrying the heart of God in his own heart and pleaded for mercy in the sight of an impending judgment of God. His intercession did not save a city but it did save Abrahams family. Friendship with God saved his family.
- c. Ex 3:7,9 God hears the cries of his children in captivity in Egypt. He acknowledges their suffering. And as with Abraham God is ready to act. Throughout the plagues God's mercy is being shown to Egypt but Pharaohs heart is hardened towards God.
 - i. Note: Moses is following orders at this point. But he is also learning something about God. He, God, loves people. His judgments are His mercy. "*God uses the least sever means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level.*"
 - ii. Ex 32:7 & 11& 32.
 1. God's fierce anger is boiling against Israel but He still has a heart for his friend, Moses.
 2. Ex 32:11 Moses pleaded with God. Heb. became sick with sorrow, to faint from grief. And he begins to plead the heart of God over the 'corrupt' people.
 3. Intercession is knowing the heart God (Mercy and Goodness: Ps 23) and from His heart cry out to him for mercy.
 4. In this case God relents, changes his mind. He has mercy according the prayers of Moses. Then Moses comes down off the mountain, loses his "cool" and smashes the commandments.
 5. Friendship with God saved a nation.
- d. In the NT
 - i. Stephen Acts 7 "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Scripture does not say that Stephen was a friend of God but it does say that Jesus stood up for Him. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

3. Friendship with God is an Honor

- a. "'*Should I hide my plan from Abraham?*'" *the Lord asked.*" (Genesis 18:17, NLT)
- b. *I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.*" (John 15:13-15, NLT)
- c. God wants to honor those who live and walk by faith. Hebrews 11 is a powerful chapter filled with those who walked by faith, pleased God with their faith, and can be seen as God's friends in the earthy. That is to be who we are faith filled people who become God's friends.
- d. God wants to let us in on what He is doing in peoples lives as well as what He is doing in the earth today. I believe that the friends of God will not be surprised at the end of the age.

Conclusion:

- Sum of the matter: God is looking for friends. What a thought to think that we could be his friends. How much of a friend do you want to be with God?
- He initiated the friendship by giving us an experience. Yahweh!
- That encounter with God brought us to a place of trust.
 - He made a covenant.
 - We believed and started walking with God. This is a journey of trust over time.
 - Trust over time equals the start of an awesome friendship with God.
- That friendship with God brings us to a place in life where we know what God is doing. That friendship creates in us a heart like God's that desire all men to friends with God. Therefore we intercede/we pray to see a lost world come to Him. Has your friendship with God brought you to a place where you talk to your friend about the condition of your friends, family, neighbors? Maybe someone prayed for you, who was a friend of God.