Friendship With God - Session 1

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Date: 07 February 2026

Preacher: Aaron Hembree

[0:00] Well, good evening. Thank you for having me, Mustang. You don't know how refreshing it is to be on the other side of Oklahoma City and to know that there's a like-minded church that believes the same thing we believe that has fun like we have fun that loves theology like we love theology and so thank you for letting me be here.

I am Aaron. If I haven't gotten to meet you, I'll be at church camp as well. I hope to see some of your faces. I love when we get to cooperate. You guys are very gracious. Joey, how many years ago?
When you came and did a D-Now with us? It's been three or four or five. It's been a while, but you shared Joey with us. You shared Jeremy. He's come and led topics on hospitality. He came and spent fall break with us and some of our college students. So thank you for sharing your people with us.
And so for that, again, I'm so grateful to be here with you. And the subject that we're going to be looking at is, I'm going to spoil it, friendship. No, you know that.
How would you go about counting how many friends you have if you had to decide? Could you count the contacts in your phone?
[1:10] And if I were to take away your phone, how many friendships would continue if you didn't have it? Or could you count by how many followers on social media? And if I were to take away your social media, how many friends would be left after a year or a year and a half?

And so in the 90s, you would know your true friend by whose phone number that you had memorized. I would like you to stand this evening if you know the phone number of your best friend. But they don't do it anymore. Jeremy, are you still in here? What's your best friend's phone number? That's right. I still remember all the way back in the 90s. I can't leave my mind because Josh Henry is my best friend.
When we look to a definition, to start somewhere, it's easy to start with the Oxford Dictionary. To start somewhere, it says, A friend is a person with whom one has developed a close and informal relationship of mutual trust and intimacy.
This was a boring definition of a friend that we can have, but there it is. And we expand it and we say this includes a number of things in our own day. It includes acquaintances, which people confess they have anywhere between 30 and 100 acquaintances.
[2:25] And you might have colleagues, which is different from all of us, people that you work with. You may have friends, of which most of us have somewhere between 10 to 15. Or you could have best friends, somewhere between two or four, if any.

People that know you well enough to know your phone number and your shoe size. And what we do know is without these kinds of relationships, without friendships, we wither and die. And we actually wither and die fairly quickly.
We see this when people are put in solitary confinement. Doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman. And for some of you, if you're one of the introverts in the room, would you just kind of give me a half hand raised?
Introverts in the room, extroverts in the room, full hand raised. If you were to take any of us and you separate us and you put us in solitary confinement, some of us would love that. I've got four kids at home.
I've got a grandma that lives with us. I've got a new dog that's a puppy. And just a little bit of solitude sounds like bliss. I would love it to be separated from everyone and friends. But after a few hours, if you're an extrovert, things begin to change with you.

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[3:31] And even a few days, for those who really love being alone, you begin to have anxiety and racing thoughts and trouble sleeping. And after a week to two weeks, you begin to get depressed and you begin to have panic attacks and emotional numbness and loss of motivation.

Two to six weeks comes with paranoia, time distortion, hallucinations, a loss of a sense of self, and memory problems. You go to one to three months, severe depression, rage, inability to ever re-engage socially again, even after isolation is removed.
And after four months, there's irreversible harm, chronic anxiety, permanent emotional flatness, and social withdrawal. So what that teaches you is that very, very quickly, you need people.
We need friends. And not only just friends, we need best friends to sharpen our minds and to go through life with. And every discussion of friendship, everybody goes back to the old philosophers. They go back to Aristotle and Cicero and these guys that wrote about the good life. And it's interesting that when Aristotle wrote about friendship in his Nicomachean Ethics, or when he wrote about Ethics, two of his ten sections were on friendship.
[4:50] Because even in the ancient world, they said part of the good life involves having friends. And he said no one would choose to live without friends but in possession of everything else that is good.

Friends are of help to the young by protecting them from mistakes. To the elderly by looking after them and making up for their failing powers of action. To those in the prime of life, to help them in doing good things.
So we have our categories of friends. We've got colleagues. We've got acquaintances, friends, best friends. Aristotle had his categories of friends too. And you can write these down. They're very helpful. They're different, but they're very helpful.
The first one, he said, in the ancient world, they had friendships of utility. Which means this person has some value in what they can do for me.
And so my wife is here. She's a connector. Isn't that right? She loves to see the value in somebody. She'll say, oh, you're an electrician. You need to meet this guy. He's a form contractor. He does submit. Whatever.
[5:47] You've got to meet this guy. You've got to meet this guy. You guys can help each other. Friendships of utility. It's not that you don't love them or don't want what's best for them, but you're not going to go out to dinner. You're not going to go to the book club with them.

And so you move. As we move up this list, it gets more and more intimate. More than just friends with someone because of what they can offer. He says, then there's friendships of enjoyment. Things that you can do for fleeting pleasure. And what he means by enjoyment and pleasure is you've got your gaming buddies. And you've got your hunting buddies. And you've got your knitting buddies.
And you've got your book club. And you've got your cheerleading team. And you've got your sorority sisters. You've got people. Again, it's not that you're not friends with them. But they don't know your soul. They don't know you at the soul level.
They don't know your phone number. They don't know your shoe size. And then he moves on to what he calls perfect friendships. Friendships of virtue. And this is where there's no flattery in this kind of friendship.
[6:45] You speak openly and frankly. You want what's best in the other person. You love the other person for them. And they love you for you. And you want what's best. It's too self-sufficient. Equals the best kinds of friends.

Perfect friends. So God does something in scripture. That over and over again. It's so common in his teaching. He takes very common metaphors like farming.
Or like fishing. Or like adoption. Or like walking. And he uses them to teach something about himself. And so when he wanted to teach the church.
About his relationship to them. When he wanted believers to know what their relationship with him was going to be like. He uses the metaphor of friendship. And he says you are my friend.
And so you've seen the definition of friendship has changed from the ancient world to today. It's different. If you ask three different people what does friendship mean. You're going to get three different answers. And so we have to ask the question. What does God mean when he says that I'm his friend?

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[7:46] What does it mean to be friends with the Lord of creation and the Lord of glory? And that's exactly the question that this is designed to answer. Over the next three sessions.

We're going to look at what it means when the God of the universe says we're friends. And calls you his friends. And I want to frame for you kind of the importance of this discussion.
Because when it comes to salvation you have the highest most beautiful metaphors. That scripture gives anywhere in the Bible. That attributes to your pictures of your salvation. Give me some.
What are some images that scripture gives you for salvation? Yeah you should say it. Walking through a door. Yeah very simple.
Very common. Open doors in scripture are freedom to preach the gospel. What else? Oh my gosh. New life. Yeah resurrection from the dead.
[8:42] That's glorious. He uses redemption as one. Which is money. He pictures it as money that you use to pay to get a prisoner of war back.

Or money that you pay that's the price of a slave. So that you can purchase their freedom. And God says I want you to understand that salvation is in part like that. That a price has been paid.
And Peter says it's not silver and gold from your aimless conduct received from tradition by your fathers. He's taking you from what's known to what's unknown. It's not silver and gold. It's the precious blood of Christ.
As of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Your salvation is like redemption. It's like an open door. He says it's like propitiation. Which was an image in the ancient world of gods that were angry.
And you would propitiate them with a sacrifice. And an animal would die. And the blood would be poured out. And God's wrath would be turned away. And God says salvation is like that. Where there's a lamb and Jesus Christ.
[9:38] And he would be sacrificed. And if anybody does sin, John says, you have an advocate with God the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He was the propitiation for our sins. It's justification, which is the courtroom where Satan is your accuser.

And Jesus is your advocate. And God is there as your judge. And he slams his gavel down and says, once and for all, you are not guilty. You are innocent of these accusations that Satan brings before you.
What a beautiful illustration. And the warmest of all is adoption. You read that. You don't even need me to explain to you what adoption is. And it's picturing different things, a new identity.
It's picturing a legal change that's happened where you were an orphan in this world and God the Father has adopted you. These are beautiful pictures. And I bring all these up because all of these are picturing something that's even higher.
They're all pointing to something even greater than themselves. They're picturing the reality of reconciliation. That you have access to God. So the warmest metaphor in Scripture is adoption.
[10:43] A justification might be your grounds for adoption. But all of it is saying, you have been reconciled to God. You are now friends with God. Does that make sense?

This is the highest metaphor that we have. Which is why Juergen Moltmann is a very influential German Reformed theologian. And he said, there's a line to be drawn through the whole Christian tradition in which Christian love can be described as friendship.
And you're going to see that. There's not one spot in the Bible, one genre in the Bible that doesn't mention friendship. And the second you go from the Bible to secular history and you see in the early church and in the medieval ages and the Puritans and the Reformers and the post-Reformation, they're all there.
There's always a few theologians that are reminding us about the doctrine of friendship. That God is our friend. Jesus, John 15, 15 says, No longer do I call you servants, for the servant doesn't know what his master is doing, but I have called you what?
Friends. You can talk. It's okay. I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you. And he goes on in Psalm 25, 14, the wisdom literature, the friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.
[11:56] And so Maltman's right. It's from the Torah to the wisdom literature to the historical books to the prophets to Jesus Christ. There's this golden thread of friendship. And so as we go through these three sessions, as we go through this time together, we're going to take two paths at once.

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I trust very smart theological church. We're going to go two places at once. I think you can do it. The first thread that we're going to follow is going to be this pattern that's all through Scripture with every doctrine.
And it's this formula that goes from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. So session one, two, and three, we're going to look at this friendship and the missions of God from God the Father. Friendship is from God the Father. And friendship is through Jesus Christ. And friendship is by his Holy Spirit. That's the first thread, that Trinitarian formula. And it's important.
And then the second one, as we go through this formula, we're going to see and define what does God mean when he says we're friends. And we have to define that. It can't mean that you're friends in the exact same way with God as you are with your buddies.
[13:04] We're not going to flatten friendship and say it's equivocal. It's the same thing. And so we're going to use two fancy words. Friendship with God is analogical language, not univocal language. And all the pastors and the guys in the back are like, of course, yes.

But for the rest of us, univocal language means we just flatten it. We can say things like, Jesus is my homeboy. And what we do when we flatten friendship like that is we are just saying, Jesus is my friend in the exact same way as I'm a friend with one of my buddies.
And we're saying that is not what the scripture is saying. He is our king. He is our Lord. There's some authority there. There's a fear there. So we say if it was in the same way, then we would be equal with God.
And it would be we do some things for him and he does some things for us. We're dependent on him. He's dependent on us. Is that how the Bible portrays our friendship? No. And so we say instead it's analogical language, which means simply that this is an analogy.
God is giving a comparison. And it's a true comparison. And it's truly meaningful. But he's taking you from what you know, friendship, in this world. And he's applying it to what you don't yet know, friendship with God.
[14:13] And he's saying it really is like human friendship in these few ways. And he picks up this metaphor of friendship so you might understand something about him. And we're going to see from the record of scripture five truths that are being communicated by the metaphor of friendship.

I want to give them to you now. Now, the first one he's going to say is that friendship is exclusive. Meaning God chose you to be his friend. He's the initiator of your friendship.
And covenant that he makes with you is the grounds for his friendship. And then the second one, friendship as revelation. Where he allows you to know him as fully as is possible, even as you are fully known by him.
And so God shares information with us like we share information with our friends. The third one, friendship as communion. Which means we're friends.
We enjoy one another's company. There's fellowship there. There's communion there. Friendship as participation. The fourth one, friendship as participation. Because friends have shared goals and shared purposes.
[15:22] And then fifth and finally, friendship as loyalty. Our third session. We'll see true friends endure all things because they are committed to one another. So friendship as exclusive.

Friendship as revelation. Friendship as communion. Friendship as participation. And friendship as loyalty. And our starting place is going to take us on both our paths at once. We're going to see that friendship is from God the Father.
And friendship is exclusive. Are you ready to jump in? When you think of friendship with God, I want you to think of the word covenant. And if you want, you can start opening in your Bibles to Genesis 12.
We're going to get there here in just a little while. That will be our text. Because friendship is the result of being in covenant with God. And so he chooses his friends.
God chose Abraham, a pagan, out of Babylon in the land of Ur. And he says, I want you to come to the promised land. And I'm going to give you a land. I'm going to give you blessing.
[16:19] I'm going to give you offspring. And all the people of the earth are going to come. All the spiritual children are going to come from you. And from your offspring. Even Jesus Christ. And he calls Israel. And it's kind of a reverse partiality.

I've always been confused because God's like, don't be partial. But then he's like, I like the weak and the lame and the crippled. And he says, I chose Israel because they were nothing. I chose

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them because they were weak in the world.
So that my power might be displayed through them. But he chose Israel and called them his friend.
And again, friendship. I'm going to read these verses to you. There's really not that many verses in scripture that explicitly say God is your friend.
But where they come shows us just how important this is. Again, they come in the law. Everywhere. The historical writings. The prophets. The wisdom. The gospels. The epistles. Everywhere you turn, somebody is talking about friendship.
And we can read them in just two minutes. I can read you every verse on friendship where it's explicitly mentioned. And you could memorize these by the end of the weekend if you wanted to. You can be an expert on this.
[17:23] And I'll read them to you. From the law. Exodus 33 11. I encourage you to write down these references. They're important. They're going to come up over and over again. And these are going to also form kind of the raw material that we're going to form out of this.

A theology of friendship. Exodus 33 11. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face. As a man speaks to his friend. You go to the historical book.
2 Chronicles 20 verse 7. When's the last time you read this one? Did you not our God drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel? And give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend.
From wisdom literature. Psalm 25 14. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him. And he makes known to them his covenant. There's that word.
From the prophets. Isaiah 41 verse 8. But you Israel my servant Jacob whom I have chosen. The offspring of Abraham my friend. And you cross the testaments.
[18:24] You go from the Old Testament. The Old Covenant. Which by the way is a covenant of friendship. And you cross into the New Testament. Which spoiler is a covenant of friendship. You come to the gospels.

In John 15 where Jesus says this is my commandment that you love one another. Even as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this. Than someone lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends. If you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants. For the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you.
And you go into the epistles. Come to the epistle of James. Chapter 2 verse 23. Abraham believed God. And it was counted to him as righteousness. And he was called a friend of God.
And I'm going to give you one bonus verse. Because I wasn't sure whether or not it was included. But it's helpful. If you keep going in James to chapter 4 verse 4. He says. You adulterous people. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?
[19:24] Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. So that's where I've been pulling from. Joey called me I think over a year ago. For this moment.

And so I've been pulling these books. And these are the verses that I pulled from to say. What is God saying? How am I his friend? And I want you to see first again the exclusiveness of friendship. And the use of the language of covenant. Look back to Psalm 25 14. Remember again it says. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him. And he makes known to them his covenant. What's a covenant? Somebody tell me.
What's a covenant? Thank you. Yes. It's a promise. A covenant is a promise. And it's an agreement that you enter into. A promise to one another.
A mutual agreement. And here's the distinction. Covenant deals with your access to God. And your standing with God. Friendship deals with the intimacy that you share.
[20:23] Given that access. Said another way. Friendships are fragile and fickle if they're not grounded in something. Covenant is what friendships are grounded in.

Said another way. Covenant answers the question on what basis do we belong to God. Friendship answers what kind of relationship does God have with those who belong to him.
Does that make sense? And so again if you're not there yet go to Genesis 12. And I want you to see that the foundation for our friendship.
God builds it. God chooses us. He elects us. It just means it's his decision. He chooses his friends. And he chooses to set his love on them. And you can hear the exclusive nature in the covenant in these verses we've already read.

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Isaiah 41. You are Israel my servant Jacob whom I have chosen. He says just in Genesis 18. We're going to get to there shortly. Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do?
[21:17] Seeing that he shall surely become a great and mighty nation. And all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have chosen him. In John 15 with the metaphor of the true vine.

Which is the greatest metaphor in scripture on friendship. Jesus says you did not choose me. I chose you. It's exclusive. And what did he choose you for?
It's one thing to be chosen. He chose you for covenant. He chose you that you might enter into a covenant with him. Which is why the Old Testament is a covenant of friendship.
You come to the New Testament which was Christ in his blood. He says it's also a covenant of friendship. And so covenant establishes the bond.
And friendship names the quality of that bond. Or said another way friendship is the end toward which covenant aims. And out of the height of the Reformation there was a guy that continued what Calvin and Luther and these guys were doing.
[22:16] His name was Coxius and he loved to write about friendship. His greatest work was called Summary of the Doctrine of God's Covenant and Testament. And he defined covenant as an agreement between God and man which entails peace and friendship.

And he goes on and he says the covenant of God is none other than God's declaration of the way in which the divine love can be obtained. And communion and fellowship with him can be established. If a man walks in this way he is in God's friendship.
And you see all of this established in Genesis 12 verses 1 to 3 when God calls Abram. Look at it with me. Now the Lord said to Abram. Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
So I go there simply to show you. And was Abraham just doing all these righteous deeds and just accomplishing all these good works? And then God's like okay now you can come and be part of my covenant.
[23:22] No he's a pagan living among pagans. And God says come I've got work for you. We're entering into a relationship together. Go where I will show you. And he's going to say shortly after in Genesis 18.

Am I going to hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? For I have chosen him. And what did he choose him for? He chose him for friendship and he chose him for covenant. Turn into Genesis 15. Skip ahead a couple chapters to Genesis 15 verse 4. This is where God begins to reveal the promises.
He says and behold the word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside and said look toward heaven and number the stars if you're able to number them.
And he said to him so shall your offspring be. And he believed the Lord and it was counted to him as righteousness. This is one of the most important verses anywhere in the Bible. We're entering into the Abrahamic covenant.
[24:22] And what you're going to see is as God brings these promises to Abraham who is an unrighteous man. It says that Abraham believed him. Simple belief. Simple faith. And it was counted to him as righteousness.

And that's so important. And Paul's going to pick up on that in Romans 4. And he's going to say this is the same that's true for us. God makes these promises and if you believe him it's counted. It's an accounting word. It's like God's got this divine ledger.
And on this side are all the unrighteous people. And on this side are the righteous people in his estimation. And when you believe God and you trust in his promises. He takes your name out of this category. And he puts you in this category.
And he says through no righteousness of your own. I have accounted you as righteous. Or he says on this side are those who are not my friends. And on this side are those who are my friends. And he takes you through faith.
And he puts you in the category of friendship. That's what he's doing. And it comes here with Abraham as the model. Look down to verse 12. Where you see the covenant being sworn in and

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being cut.
[25:20] But when the sun had gone down and it was dark. Behold a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On the day that the Lord made a covenant with Abraham.

He didn't make a contract. Anybody ever enter in a contract? I don't know if you can do that until you're 18. So probably not. Some in the back of the room have entered in a contract. You can break a contract. As a matter of fact contracts have terms.
You can read the terms. We've redefined since California in the 1970s. To no fault divorce. Marriage now is a contract. Which means you can read the terms. And you can look at what the consequences would be.
And then you can decide I don't want to do this anymore. As if you could nullify a covenant made before God the Father. With a piece of paper that you file in a filing cabinet. With your local government. Right?
A covenant is being made. And so this is not a contract. It's a binding covenant. And there's no way out of this commitment. Without being a covenant breaker. And you're going to see scripture does not have kind words.
[26:16] For those who break covenant. And so what God is doing. Is in the ancient world. They would. When they would make a covenant. It was literally the word cut a covenant. You know this? Have you heard this before?

They would cut a covenant. And they would literally. Because they would cut an animal in half. They would separate the pieces. Those who are making the covenant. Would walk through those pieces. Essentially saying. If I ever break this covenant. May it be to me.
As it was with this animal. And so there's a couple things. I want you to see here. That whenever this covenant happens. God puts Abram to sleep.
And so he's not able to enter into. He's entering into a covenant. But the terms are defined by God. God himself walks through the animal. Saying may it be to me.
If I do not uphold this covenant. It was not for Abram to swear to. God alone was going to uphold the terms of the covenant. And that is absolutely wonderful.
[27:12] It's beautiful. This illustration is a little bit gross. But the truths that it contains are beautiful. My pastoral assistant. Wanted this as his wedding text.

Which I would not recommend. But it was great. It means a lot to them. It's an extremely important covenant in the Bible. And so we did it right there. He cut the animals in half. And their bloody pieces are right there. But this.
I show you this to say. This is your grounds. The grounds of your friendship. With God. This is the covenant. Where God says. I will uphold the covenant.
Right. What was Abram doing? He was asleep. When God swore. That he would uphold his end. And he unilaterally cuts a covenant. With you. It's his obligation. To see it through. Because we. By nature. You by nature. Are a covenant breaker. And God by nature. Is a covenant keeper. And if Abraham had sworn that covenant. He would have broken it. And God knew that.
[28:09] And so. I'm getting ahead of. Into future sections. But. That's why we have Jesus Christ. Who came and paid. The penalty of a covenant breaker. Which is why the three words.

That you're never going to say to God. In this life. Or the next life. Is but you promised. It's three words you'll never say. So what does Abraham contribute to the covenant? Nothing.
He sleeps. And it was counted to him. By faith. When he trusted in God's promises. It was counted to him. As righteousness. Read Genesis 15. Four again. Behold.
The word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside. And said. Look toward the heaven. And number the stars. If you're able to number them. And he said to him. So shall your offspring be.
And he believed the Lord. And it was counted to him. As righteousness. And the state following that covenant. Was friendship. And from that moment forward. God calls Abram. His friend.
[29:04] The quality of the relationship. Is absolutely beautiful. God began to talk to Abram. Or Abraham. Like he talked to Moses. He spoke to him face to face. As God speaks with a friend.

The second thing. As we work through these five truths. The second thing we said. That a covenant. Or that a friendship communicates. Is revelation. Revelation. Turn to Genesis 18.
17 to 18. Moses records these words.

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Shall I hide from Abraham. What I'm about to do. Seeing that Abraham. Shall surely become a great. And mighty nation. And all the nations of the earth. Shall be blessed in him. He's asking. Am I going to hide from my friend.
What I'm about to do. What was he about to do here. He's about to go rain fire. Down on Sodom and Gomorrah. And he's like. I'm going to go tell. I'm going to go tell Abraham. What I'm going to do. Before I go do it. Why would God.
[30:05] Tell Abraham. About Sodom and Gomorrah. Before he did it. Why does he have to consult with him. And the only answer is. Because he's his friend. It's so simple.

He went and told him about it. Because he's his friend. And he wanted to include. And so this is what we do. The analogy is. Friends share themselves with their friends. Friends share their plans. What boy in the room.
Before he asks out a girl. Doesn't go talk to his friends about it first. What girl. Before she says yes to the boy asking him out. Does not talk to her friends first. You do anything.
Before you do anything. You talk to your friends. Before you pick what college. You're going to talk to your friends. Before you get engaged to somebody. You're going to talk to your friends. It's excitement. It's joy. It's anticipation. You get to share yourself.
And your thoughts with someone else. I heard a definition of friendship. In the books that I read. In getting ready for this. It says it's one soul shared between two people. And I was like I love that.
[31:00] That is a wonderful definition of friendship. And so God. In. Twisting the metaphor a little bit here. Sharing a soul with you. He wants to reveal himself to you. Your friends. He shares himself.

He wants you to know him. As he fully knows you. This is friendship with God. And so there's. As we said. There's only. I mean there's not that many verses. That talk about friendship. We've read them all.
But they talk. Disproportionately about. Revelation. Listen to the language of Revelation. In John 15 15. No longer do I call you servants. For the servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends.
For the reason. Because all that I've heard from the father. I've made known to you. There it is. That's Revelation. Psalm 25 14. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him.
And he makes known to them his covenant. There's Revelation. And he goes on in Genesis 18. He says. Am I going to hide from Abraham what I'm about to do. In destroying Sodom and Gomorrah.
[31:54] No. He shares with him. Write down this verse. Amos 3 17. This has implications far beyond friendship. I love this passage. It's powerful. Amos says. The Lord God does nothing.

Without revealing his secrets first to his servants. The prophets. Did you catch that? God does nothing in this world. Without first revealing it to his friends.
And so you go back and you think about it. Before he destroyed Jerusalem. He warned the people. He told the people. Before he ever brought a new covenant. He told you it was coming. Before he ever built the temple.
He told you. Before he ever sent his spirit out. He told you. What did he not tell us beforehand? He told us about the end of all things now. What we can anticipate in heaven. What it's going to be like. The signs that we can look for. And then go to Isaiah 48 3. He even tells you why. Or at least part of the reason why. Part of it is you're his friend. And he wants to share these things with you. But another reason. As he says. The former things I declared of old.
[32:52] They went out from my mouth. And I announced them. And then suddenly I did them. And they came to pass. I declared them to you from old. Before they came to pass. I announced them. Lest you should say. My idol did them.

My carved image. And my metal image. Commanded them. And so he's saying. So that you would know. That I am the Lord. That you would know. That this isn't something. That somebody's idol did. Or like.
I told you. What was going to happen. And now you can be glorified. And you can relish in me. Because. I told you beforehand. So again. His friends can confess.
That he alone is God. He spoke it. And it came to pass. So what do we need to remember. From these first two elements. First two truths. About this metaphor of friendship.
They are distinctively. These two. Are distinctively from God the Father. It's God the Father. Who elects you. It's God the Father. Who reveals himself. It's God the Father. Who sends.

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[33:45] The perfect revelation. Of Jesus Christ. Into the world. These dimensions. Are from him. God elects you. He chooses you. As his friends. It says that he loved you. Before you loved him.

Ephesians 1. 4 to 5. He chose us in him. Before the foundation. Of the world. That we should be holy. And blameless. Before him. In love. He predestined us. For adoption. He predestined us. For warmth. And fellowship. And friendship. And he initiates the covenant with you. Just like he did with Abraham. And then we saw the second. That friendship involves revelation.
God the Father reveals his plans to you. And he reveals his will to you. And you look at the language of him. He does it all. He chooses. He cuts. He binds. He promises. And so what do you do?
You get to marvel. And be in a joyful relationship. With the God that you were once separated from. You get to enjoy the fellowship. Of your creator.
[34:43] And a beautiful thought in this. Is that the emotional distance. That can come in a covenant. Or even in a friendship with you. And your friends of this world. Sin drives separation. In your friendship.

Doesn't it? It drives emotional distance. In your friendship. And I want you to see that there's nothing that can overcome true friendship. I've been best friends with the same guy since we went to preschool together.
At First Baptist Church. I was there. I got my Batman figurine out of my backpack. And it was like the rest was history. And then we played on a Wii Ball team together. And we ate dino bites at Garfield's together on Friday nights.
And then we played games together. And I knew his phone number. And we went to college. And we were in a band together. And we went to high school together. And we were in a band together. We did. And it doesn't matter how far that we're apart.
Or how long it's been. When we come back together. You know what? We pick up right where we left off. There's nothing that that friend can do. That would separate my love for him. You can't ruin that friendship.
[35:48] I made a covenant with my wife. And I can truly say that our covenant. There is no dissolving that covenant. Because if there was a way that we could dissolve it.

Then that would mean that it's conditional. And the kind of love that we have. The kind of love I share with my wife. And the kind of love I share with my best friend. Is unconditional love. There are no conditions. And so when we come to scripture.
God picks up on this metaphor. And he applies it to himself. And he takes it deeper. And he takes it wider. And he says how much more him. How much more will he reveal himself to us.
And how much more will his relationship endure. Because God the Father made the way for this face-to-face communication.
God the Father chose you. God the Father made a covenant with you. And established this covenant. And it's not in your power to dissolve it. To say it in a way.
[36:44] You're asleep. It's not up to you. To dissolve. And a friendship. Is the result of that covenant. It's a relationship. Not with a fellow man.

Or a fellow woman. More beautifully than that. This is the relationship with the Lord of glory. Think about this. He calls you his friend. Would you all please pray with me. We'll go to the Lord.
That he would help us understand this metaphor. Lord God. Thank you for this providential opportunity. That we would all come together on a Friday night. A Saturday. We dedicate this time to you.
You have brought us here. Everybody's here for a purpose. We're here because you want to teach us something. You want to create friends among us. So that we have people that we can know. We can be truly known. And God we're here because your word speaks about this friendship. This relationship that you're initiating with us. Or for many of us that you've already initiated in.
[37:41] And Lord we want to understand it. What does it mean that you call us your friend? Teach us to understand what it means to be a friend of God. And I pray for anybody in this room who has no earthly friendships. Lord that you would grant that.

That they may say after this weekend. I have two or four very good friends. That I can walk through this life with. And for any in this room who do not have a relationship with you. Through Jesus Christ. I pray especially for them Lord.

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That they may know the joy and the peace and the blessing. That comes from being called a friend of God. God be with us this weekend. Bless us. Help us to have so much fun Lord. We ask all this in Christ's name.
Amen.

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