

Pastor Clifford
June 25th, 2021

Buy From Me Gold (Part 7): **Now I Call You Friends**

John 15:12-17 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that 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. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another."

- Jesus tenaciously holds onto love.
- Love is the entire truth of God.
- Jesus expects us to love as He did!
- God is love!

No greater love

Are there degrees of love? Let me take you to a parable Jesus used.

Luke 7:36-48 "One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. **37** And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, **38** and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head

and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. **39** Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." **40** And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." **41** "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" **43** Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." **44** Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. **46** You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. **47** Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." **48** And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Judging from the context, I feel the question that is more fitting is '*How can I love more?*'.

No longer do I call you servants, but now call you friends

Who are the friends?

James 2:21-23 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; **23** and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God."

Is there a difference between fiends and servants? The main difference from Jesus is that friends have the privilege of revelation where servants do not.

John 15:18-25 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **19** If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **20** Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. **21** But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'"

Why does the world hate us?

- Because we have different Fathers (Allegiances)
- **John 8:44-45** "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **45** But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me."

We are judged by their god who is simply who they want him to be

2 Timothy 3:4-5 "Treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power."

2 Timothy 4:3-4 "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

We are not of the world

1. Jesus told His disciples, "You are not of the world" (John 15:19); though we are in the world, we do not derive our basic identity from the world. As the apostle Peter stated, we reside as "aliens, exiles & sojourners" on the earth (cf. 1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11); likewise, Paul said, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (cf. Phil 3:20). Our primary identity is not that we are Americans... it is that we are Christians (first & foremost). Our value system is not dependent on Congress or the Supreme Court, but on the revealed, moral will of God in Scripture. Jesus said, "You are not of the world, I chose you out of the world" (John 15:19) – so the ultimate reason we are not of the world is because God the Father has chosen us and we have responded to God's sovereign choice.

To hate the Son results in death

2. Jesus said to His disciples, "Whoever hates Me hates My Father also" (John 15:23). To hate Jesus is to hate God. That's why Muslims don't worship the same God we do; they hate the God we worship because they hate the Jesus we worship – though they honor Him as a prophet, they deny that He is more than a prophet... they deny that He is the Son of the Father... they deny that He is the incarnation of the Triune Godhead... they deny that the Father even has a Son... they deny that Jesus died on the cross as the all-sufficient atonement for our sin and was raised again bodily from the dead... they deny that Jesus alone is worthy of worship and honor... and they deny that faith in Jesus alone is the only path to forgiveness of sins – to deny all of this regarding Jesus is to "hate" Him. So Allah is not the same god as the God and Father of Jesus. When people make Jesus into something He is not, like cults and liberal theologians do... they hate Jesus and the Father.

To represent Christ well we take on His values

3. Jesus said repeatedly, *"The world will hate Christians and persecute Christians"* Scripture states unequivocally that "those who choose to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (cf. 2 Tim 3:12) – the expression *"godly life"* is emphatic in Greek. "Faithful believers will be persecuted" – as John Stott states it in his commentary on Second Timothy, "The godly arouse the antagonism of the worldly; it has always been so. It was so for Christ, and He said it would be so for us" (cf. John 15:18-20; 16:33). Those who withdraw from the world and keep their mouth shut, don't suffer persecution; only those who assimilate into the world and speak the truth of Christ to others, experience persecution – so only those who are both in the world and in Christ simultaneously experience the inevitability of persecution.

We need to respond from preparedness

4. Ultimately the question is, *"What is the believer's response to hatred and persecution, and the world's rejection of Jesus?"* Jesus told His disciples that hatred, persecution, and opposition would happen "so that they wouldn't be caught off guard when it did occur" (John 16:4). The apostle John said the same thing in his first epistle: "Don't be surprised that the world hates you" (1 John 3:13). The faithful followers of Jesus will have the same affect on the world of rebellious unbelievers that Jesus did – why? because we will be out of step with the trajectory of society... we will refuse to embrace the changing ethics of our day... therefore our rebellious world will not respond with kindness. When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, He immediately followed it up by saying that "the Holy Spirit (i.e., the Helper) would teach them and empower them and encourage them to stand firm in the face of opposition, so that they can testify and bear witness to this world about who I am" (John 16:7ff).

Jesus foresaw that when He left His disciples and ascended into heaven, they would not find life easy. The gospel they would be propagating would cause them to collide with those who are worldly-minded, and with the religious men of the day; thus for the true Christian, opposition is inevitable. Since the first century, more than 43,000,000 believers have been martyred for their faith (some recent studies put that number as high as 70,000,000) – how did these people endure the hatred and persecution of the world? It is only by the indwelling presence and power of “the Helper” (i.e., the Holy Spirit) whom Jesus promised to all of His followers; it is the Spirit who equips God’s people and gives them the grace to bear witness about the gospel of Christ (cf. John 14:12-21; 15:8).