

Theme: Jesus called His disciples 'friends' because He has made known to us everything that the Father gave Him to reveal. Jesus loves us and wants to be personally connected to us as friends, someone that we can talk to, pray to, count on, and trust above all others. What a friend we have in Jesus!

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

- 1. Who was one of your closest friends growing up, and what made them such a great friend?
- 2. "What a friend we have in Jesus! All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry, everything to Him in prayer." What have you been praying about, and talking with Jesus about lately?

In the Word: Read John 15:9-17

- 3. This is a continuation of the previous Gospel reading from John 15:1-8. What are the connections between 1-8 and 9-17? Look for common themes or common words and make connections between these two passages. Share what you find.
- 4. What is the relationship between love and holding onto Jesus' commands (note his command in vs 12)?
- 5. What is so significant about what Jesus says in John 15:13?
- Many people assume we simply 'choose' our religion, or need to 'make a decision' for Jesus. How does what Jesus says in 15:16 really challenge this? Compare it to Ephesians 1:3-6 and 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5.
- 7. How did Jesus demonstrate what He meant by "love one another" earlier in John 13:1 ff?

Putting it all Together (what we should believe or do as disciples)

- 8. What does it mean to you that Jesus calls you His friend?
- 9. What are some concrete ways that you, personally, are able to "love one another, as Jesus has loved you"?
- 10. Think of a time when a person chose you (either to be a friend, a teammate, or a spouse). How does it feel to be chosen? How does it feel to be chosen by God?
- 11. Jesus appointed us to go and bear fruit that will last. Last week we reviewed the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. What is it about the fruit of the Spirit that makes this kind of fruit last? We work for so many things that are temporary, fleeting, and passing away. But how do the fruits of the Spirit create lasting impacts for eternity?
- 12. In John 3:16, Jesus said that God loves the world. In 1 John 4:16, John wrote that "God is love." But in these verses of John 15, we see that Jesus invites us to know God's love through Him. How does Jesus directly, personally, and powerfully help us know the love of God?

Prayer: Praise God for His amazing, unconditional, reckless love for sinners, and for how He has revealed that love through Jesus' death and resurrection for us. Ask God's love to fill us to overflowing, that we might love one another as He has loved us. Pray that God's love would be manifest and made evident in our homes and families, our church family, and by Christians all over the world.

Next Week: The Easter Season concludes with Ascension Day as Jesus completes His earthly ministry to begin a new phase of the Kingdom of God by the power of the Spirit who brings Christ to each and everyone of us! We worship Jesus as the risen and ascended Lord, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.