

Daily Reflection on Scripture Week of October 16



Last week we talked about God present in all things. This week we are going to talk about how we come to know God through Jesus and how he interacts with his followers. In this text we see Jesus use that familiar term friendship to describe his relationship with his followers. The idea of friendship with God through Jesus gives us a special lens to look at our lives and see how his example and words relate to our everyday lives.

As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete. This is my commandment: Love each other just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. You are my friend if you do what I command you. I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you. You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last. As a result, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. I give you these commandments so that you can love each other.

John 15:9-17

May the Daily Reflection on Scripture lead you to falling more deeply in love with Christ, life and the people around you. May you be transformed by the compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom of Jesus who continues to show us the way to live with a faith that takes us beyond belief.

If you would like to receive the Sacred Pauses on your phone, then text crossroads to 41411. You will receive the Sacred Pauses as a text message at noon. Daily Reflections are available via email each morning. Sign up at www.everydaylifewithgod.org.

Sunday October 16, 2016

John 15:9 As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love.

Reflection: Jesus talks with his disciples a long time about his union with God, the love the Father has for him. He explains that this relationship with God is the source of his love and friendship with them. He encourages them to *remain* in his love. This means we have a choice. What practice can you engage today to help you realize that God is as close as your breath and that through that connection Jesus is your best friend? If you don't receive the Sacred Pause text you might want to sign up by texting – crossroads to 41411. This is a great daily practice. It will come at noon.

Sacred Pause – Pause and remember that Jesus calls you friend. Friendship with Jesus is an indestructible bond that unites us. Reflect on that gift of love and share it.

Monday October 17, 2016

Proverbs 17:17 A Friend loves at all times.

Reflection: This simple statement reminds us that true friends hang in there with us during the good times and the bad. This sounds simple but to be present to someone who is suffering or going through a tough time is difficult. Our instinct is to turn away from suffering and not see it. Sometimes true friendship requires us to be present to someone right up to the moment of their death. This takes the kind of compassion that can only

come from God's spirit at work in us. Have there been times when you wanted to turn away from a friendship because it was just too hard? This is a natural part of life. If faced with the situation again, lean into Jesus, receive his compassion for self and remember you are never alone in facing this challenge.

Sacred Pause - Pause and allow a friend to come to your mind. Take a moment and pray for him or her. If you have the opportunity share with them that you have prayed for them.

Tuesday October 18, 2016

John 15:15 I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Reflection: We don't think of Jesus' disciples as servants, but he was their teacher and they called him "master". This is how the relationship would have been thought of in his day. In this verse Jesus breaks through that cultural barrier and says "you are my friends", my equals, because I am sharing with you everything God shares with me. Jesus says this because he is urging his disciples to follow his example and break down barriers with others, calling them friends and equals. Are there any barriers of superiority and inferiority in your life between you and others? How can Jesus' words help you to break through those barriers and see everyone as potential friend and equal?

Sacred Pause - Pause and reflect on the gift of friendship. Is there a friend with whom you have lost touch? Ask God to help you find a way to reconnect with that person.

Wednesday October 19, 2016

John 15:13 No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends.

Reflection: We usually interpret this verse literally, meaning to die for someone else. There are times in life, such as in battle, when soldiers die to save another, but far more often "laying down our lives" means giving up our own agendas, wants or desires in favor of what someone we love might want or need from us. It might mean changing our plans to accommodate a friend. It could be sacrificing a period of time to be a caregiver to someone we love or just met. It means putting the best interest of others before our own. Jesus was teaching this as an important life lesson and a true proof of love. How might God be calling you to lay down something (pride, time, money, etc.) in your life to be a friend, a Jesus with skin on, to someone you know?

Sacred Pause – A simple gift of a smile or a kind word can be gestures of Jesus' style of friendship. His words encourage us that love leads the way. A comforting smile heals.

Thursday October 20, 2016

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give you that you love one another, even as I have loved you. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Reflection: Jesus taught on this theme many times, but this is one of the most profound. He makes it clear that what identifies us as his followers is not the good things we do, although they are important and we need to do the work Jesus' laid out for us. What stamps us with the mark of "followers of the way of Jesus" is our love for each other. With all the petty squabbles and disagreements that arise among us, even within the Christian community this is an important commandment Jesus gave. Jesus is still commanding us to do this. What is one simple way you can show your love for your friends, and all people today?

Sacred Pause - Who is your closest friend? Do they know how much you cherish your friendship? Pause and reflect on how you can show him or her your love as Jesus loves you.

Friday October 21, 2016

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Reflection: In every friendship conflict will arise. This simple bit of wisdom reminds us to keep our love for each other strong and fresh so that when moments of conflicts arise love will be the stronger force. The

relationship is more important than anything else. Even Jesus prayed for God to let the “cup” of suffering and death pass by him, but his fervent love for God allowed him to accept his death. Great love for one another allows us to let a lot of things go. Just let them go, and move on with our larger goal of living the way of Jesus. Daily practices help us to strengthen our love for each other, become more focused on God’s presence all around us, and to have the self-control to let things go and stay focused on Jesus.

Sacred Pause - Is there a person you can’t imagine as a friend? Whatever the issues identify one good thing in that person? Seeing the good can be a moment of healing grace.

Saturday October 22, 2016

John 15:17 I give you these commandments so that you can love each other.

Reflection: All of Jesus’ teachings to his followers was as a mentor so that when he was gone from them they would be able to be like him and follow in his ways as they spread out into the world. In John he also said “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” Jesus was sent into homes and villages, neighborhoods and places where other Jewish leaders would never have gone. He befriended the untouchables of his time causing his followers to scratch their heads in wonder. Why does he reach out to them? He stood in solidarity with the suffering of all humanity, inviting all people to come together in loving community. Is there some place you are called to do the same?

Sacred Pause - Jesus always moved beyond his own circle of friends to offer welcome and friendship to everyone he met. Pause and reflect on what that might mean for you today.