**Salendine Nook Baptist Church – Church Together**

**Sunday 6th April 2025 – The Friendship Of Jesus**

**Welcome**

In today’s Service we will be looking at: **John 15 v. 9 - 25**

The theme for our service today is: **The Friendship Of Jesus**

Today our service also includes: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today’s service and that you would be able to **Know And Understand The True Meaning Of Friendship With Jesus**

**Call To Worship**

**Psalm 100 v. 1 - 5 NLT**

Shout for joy to the Lord, O earth!

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God!

He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of

His pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and bless his name.

For the Lord is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

And his faithfulness continues to

each generation.

**Opening Prayer**

Father God, We praise You today for all that You have done in our lives. You are faithful even when we are faithless. Your love pursues us even when we are unlovable. Your forgiveness covers our sins and frees us from its penalty. We praise You for your love and faithfulness towards us. Your presence in our lives changes everything, empowering us to live each moment of every day, content in knowing You are in control. As we face today, Lord, remind us that no matter what happens, we can praise You! In Your Name we pray.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord

**Offering**

If you feel that you are able to, then please keep on giving to the work of the church here at Salendine Nook, with a generous and cheerful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

**Moment Of Reflection**

“Friendship takes intentionality and effort and Jesus models true friendship for us in His life of ministry” **Aubrey Coleman**

**Bible Reading**

**John 15 v. 9 – 25 NIV**

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business.

Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

**The World Hates the Disciples**

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 24 If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. 25 But this is to fulfil what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

**Song Suggestion**

I Stand Amazed In The Presence

**Moment Of Reflection**

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from you Father I have made known to you.

**Church Together Thought**

A friend is what? Human beings require friendship. It is hard for them to be totally alone because they are made in the image of God, who are **Father, Son and Spirit** and who relate to each other.

As we have seen in past weeks, people must learn to be friends and grow in their understanding of what friendship means. Even so, we let each other down because we struggle with our own fallen nature - things such as greed, competitiveness, or envy seems to get in the way of friendships.

All of us would be wise to heed **Proverbs 16 v. 17, 18** which says: ‘The path of the upright leads away from evil; whoever follows that path is safe. Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall’. As well as enriching one another's lives, we sometimes hurt each other and even cause pain. In extreme cases friends can become enemies as we saw in **Psalm 55**.

Fortunately, some friendships do last. I would suggest that essential elements of lasting friendships are love, acceptance, commitment and grace. Without the will and grace to forgive and to be forgiven, human friendships are unlikely to stand the test of time. To those elements of friendship might be added a willingness to accept the cost of friendship.

In Jesus, the perfect friend, we see all these elements displayed. When Jesus began his earthly ministry, he set about building a group of friends and he showed them what true friendship meant. He shared his life with them and prepared them to carry on his work.

There were times when he spoke about friendship. Let his words from **John 15 v. 13 & John 15 v. 14, 15** speak to you now. 'The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them'. 'You are my friends if you do what I command you ... I call you friends because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father'. These words were spoken in the context of an intimate conversation with his disciples.

He had spoken of the vine, probably after the Lord's Supper, and used it as an image or picture of the relationship between himself, the vine and his disciples, the branches, to illustrate the close union between himself and his friends. As he was soon to demonstrate, this love was to be sacrificial. Jesus went on to warn that his friends would meet opposition. There would be enemies among those to whom he had been sent, as recorded in **John 15 v. 18**.

Disbelief in Jesus was their sin, as we are told in **John 15 v. 22** because he had actually been among them, and they should have known better. I wonder how Judas felt at this point. Before long this so - called friend of Jesus betrayed him.

There was never a time when Jesus needed his friends more than in the period leading to his arrest and crucifixion. He chose three of the twelve to be with him while he agonised in prayer in Gethsemane. The three fell asleep, and later the eleven scattered, bewildered and scared. It seems only John was at the cross.

Jesus knew what it was like to be abandoned by friends, but they later discovered that he did not abandon them. He would send his Helper, the Holy Spirit, and they would be empowered to live as friends of God and each other, as **John 15 v. 26, 27** records for us.

All of us need to be wise in our friendships and to know whom our true friends are, recognising that they mean well even when they get things wrong.

Other people may give an appearance of friendship while being our enemies, as we are told in **Proverbs 27 v. 6**. Hard as it may seem, we are to love them and take the route of friendship as described in **Proverbs 25 v. 21** which says: ‘If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them water to drink’.

Jesus' way is one of friendship and love. Those among us who have followed Paul's friendships through **Acts 18** will be aware that God's work was best done through good human relationships. **Acts 18 v. 24 - 28** gives us a wonderful picture of friends using sensitivity in their communication and working in partnership. We should not be surprised at this, because that is the way of Christ our friend, whose enemies described him as a friend of sinners, as **Matthew 11 v. 19** tells us.

What kind of friendship does Jesus offer his followers? Packed into nine short verses in **John 15 v. 9 - 17** is a wealth of encouraging answers that we as a fellowship can learn from.

**FIRSTLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP THAT BRINGS JOY TO JESUS (John 15 v. 9 – 11)**

Are you the kind of person who is taken by surprise that Jesus puts up with a relationship with you? Then prepare to be astonished - he doesn't just tolerate it, he enjoys it! Make a heartfelt gift to Jesus - stay friendly, stay obedient, stay faithful to him and thus make his joy complete.

**SECONDLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP THAT HAS GONE TO EXTREMES (John 15 v. 12 – 13)**

No matter how far you have gone for Jesus, he has already gone further for you. He defined the ultimate in friendship, and days later he demonstrated it. Extraordinarily, Jesus was prepared to go as far as death for his enemies, for as **Romans 5 v. 6 – 8** says: ‘When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and dies for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners’. – if that is so, just imagine the extent of his love for you, his friends!

**THIRDLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP WITH RESPONSIBILITIES (John 15 v. 14)**

Friendship brings responsibilities. It doesn't involve a contract, like parenthood or marriage, so the responsibilities are not categorical. But that is not an excuse to take them lightly, especially not when the partner in the relationship is Jesus. What kind of friendship thrives on disobedience?!

**FOURTHLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP WITH PRIVILEGES (John 15 v. 15)**

Christians are people who have begun to grasp the answer to the great mysteries of existence - why we are here, what life is for, where we are heading. How easily we take for granted the fact that we are in possession of information that much of the rest of the world agonises over. How do we know these things? Our friend Jesus has made them known to us.

**FIFTHLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP THAT IS SECURE (John 15 v. 16)**

The basis of our friendship with Jesus is not our wavering choice of him - we know from our experience of human friendship how fickle and unreliable that would be. Rather it is based on his unwavering choice of us. We may have committed ourselves in some measure to him, but he has committed himself without measure to us.

**FINALLY, IT’S A FRIENDSHIP WORTH SHARING (John 15 v. 17)**

The sustenance we derive from friendship gives us the strength to be people who give. And so, it is with Jesus. He tells us, 'You know what it is to have received friendship; now be people who give friendship’.

In obedience to this we will never be debtors - his love is great enough for us to share it effortlessly. That is what it means to bear fruit, as recorded for us in **John 15 v. 16b**.

**Communion**

Jesus said: ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’. ***Romans 5 v. 8*** also tells us: ‘God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us’.

**An Invitation to the Table:**

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may, not because you are strong, but because you are weak. Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help. Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you. Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body, his People.

**A prayer of Approach:**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret is hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

**As we prepare to receive the bread and the cup, we hear the words of The Institution:**

The Apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, when he says: ‘For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night that he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me’. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11 v. 23 ***-*** 26

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving before we eat the bread and drink the cup:**

Loving God, we praise and thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you for his life and ministry, announcing the good news of your kingdom and demonstrating its power in the lifting of the downtrodden, and the healing of the sick, and the loving of the loveless. We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross, for the redemption of the world, and for your raising him to life again, as a foretaste of the glory we shall share. We give you thanks for this bread and wine, symbols of our world and signs of your transforming love. Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that we might be renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ and formed into his body. This we pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

**WE NOW SHARE AND EAT OF THE BREAD AND SHARE AND DRINK OF THE CUP**

**A Final Prayer of Acclamation:**

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we confess. Your final coming we await. Glory be to you, O Christ. Amen.

**Prayers Of Intercession**

Creator God, we praise and thank you for the earth and the wonder of its life: the beauty of landscape, sky and seasons.

Redeemer God, we praise you for Jesus Christ and the glory of your work in him: his life in all its fullness of doing and being; his following through of your way to the end; for your raising of him to life and all who follow him. Help us to be more like Jesus.

Inspirer God, we praise and thank you for human history and the richness of our inheritance: the heights of human artistry and the depths of human understanding. You come to us by your Spirit and perform your work of new creation. Generous and bountiful God all good things come from you and now we give you thanks.

God of kindness, you gave your only Son, because you loved the world so much. We pray for the peace of the world. We remember in prayer today the ongoing conflict that rages throughout the world. May your peace dwell in the lives of those how’s lives have been devastated by war. Move among us by your Spirit, break down barriers of fear, suspicion, and hatred. Heal the human family of its divisions and unite it in the bonds of justice and peace.

We pray for our country loving Lord. Enrich our common life; strengthen the forces of truth and goodness; teach us to share prosperity, that those whose lives are impoverished may pass from need and despair to dignity and joy.

We pray for those who suffer, for those who have recently lost loved ones and for those who are unwell at this time. Surround them with your love and compassion, support them with your strength, console them with your comfort, and give them hope and courage beyond themselves.

We pray for our families, for those whom we love. Protect them at home; support them in times of difficulty and anxiety, that they may grow together in mutual love and understanding, and rest content in one another.

We pray for the Church wherever it may be and also our own fellowship here at Salendine Nook. Keep our church true to the Gospel and responsive to the gifts and needs of all. Make known your saving power in Jesus Christ by the witness of our faith, our worship and our life. We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

Be Thou My Vision

**Moment Of Reflection**

**A Prayer For Friendship With Jesus**

Jesus, You walked this earth and knew people just like me. Help my friendship with You to grow deeper. All me to understand how much You, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit love me for who I am and who You created me to be.

Remain close to me throughout the day, in my trials and in my triumphs. And like all good friends, may I learn to trust that You have my best interests at heart.

Grant me the grace and honor, Jesus, of reflecting our friendship in my actions towards my family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and strangers. And help me always to be Your hands and heart when someone in my life needs support and friendship. I ask all this in Your holy name.

**Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father who art in Heaven

Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

On earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

And the glory, forever and ever.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

As The Deer Pants For The Water

**Blessing**

Now may the Spirit of God,

Who brooded over the waters

And brought order out of chaos,

Find a home in our hearts

And settle our minds, both now

As we leave this place,

And into tomorrow, and may we

Live lives that are worthy

Of the glory of God, our Saviour.

**Amen**