Jesus the Friend

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, the second college edition, a friend is:
1. "A person whom one knows well and is fond of; intimate associate; close acquaintance."
2. "A person on the same side in a struggle; one who is not an enemy or foe; ally."
3. "A supporter or sympathizer."
4. "Something thought of as like a friend in being helpful; reliable, etc."

- Jesus is not the first time God presents himself has a friend
- It is just the most obvious as he became flesh
- right through the Bible we see God relate to people as a friend

Adam-

Gen 3:8 When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man[a] and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Enoch-

Gen 5:24 walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

Abraham

Isaiah 41:8 **But as for you, Israel my servant,**
Jacob my chosen one,
descended from Abraham my friend,

James 2:23 and so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."[a] He was even called the friend of God.[b]

Moses

Exodus 33:11 Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

Job

Job 29:1-6 Job now resumed his response: "Oh, how I long for the good old days,

when God took such very good care of me.

He always held a lamp before me

and I walked through the dark by its light.

Oh, how I miss those golden years

when God's friendship graced my home,

When the Mighty One was still by my side

and my children were all around me,

When everything was going my way,

and nothing seemed too difficult.

David

Acts 13:22 But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'[a]

<u>Gods desire has always been to develop such a deep relational connection with us</u>

<u>That best way to describe this connection is 'friend'</u>

- As I said when God embodied himself as Jesus in Human form we see this relational element of friendship most clearly.

-Friends are open and honest about what they are going through

(Matt 26.36)(John 13.21:)

Jn 12:27 Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came!

Jn 13:21 Now Jesus was deeply troubled,[a] and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

-Friends share meaningful moments with each other

- -storytelling

Luke 22;15 Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins.

Mark 12:41f Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. 42 Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins.[a]

43 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. 44 For

they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."

-openness about feelings deepens friendships

John 15:12-17 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than 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 slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. 16 You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

-Friends share life together

- They ate together
- Slept together
- when to weddings together
- when to funerals
- walked on the road
- fished
- prayed
- Talked
- Celebrated,
- Mourned

-friends eat together

Mark 2:15-16 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) 16 But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees[a] saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?[b]"

John 12:1-2 Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. 2 A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate (reclining at the table)[a] with him

-friends are concerned for each other

John 14:1 "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

Luke 10:40f *As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."*

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

-Friends forgive

Luke 22:31-32 Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers."

-In his commitment to them, he dealt with them on the basis of 'today' not on the bases of the known future failures and the known past mistakes

- He knew ahead of time that Judas would betray Him (John 6.64), that Peter would deny Him three times (Matt 26.34), and that all the disciples would desert Him at the Garden (Mt 26.31), but this did not stop Him for experiencing friendship and closeness with His followers.

His closest moments of the Supper were ***after*** repeated failures during their travels, and His closest moments at the Great Commission and in the post-resurrection appearances were ***after*** the betrayal/denial/ desertions...

-Friends take risks with intimacy and trust even known they will be let down

I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.' (John 13.18) quoting Ps 41.9: *"Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*

[cf. Matt 26.50: *"Friend, why have you come?" or "Friend, do what you came for"*]

"For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor." (John 13.29) and *"But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume*

not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?" 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." (John 12.4)

-friends ask each other for help

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." (Matt 26.36)

-friends expect loyality

"And they came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." 33 And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. 34 And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." 35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." 37 And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? (Mark 14.32)

-He confronted them with major disagreements in agenda

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (Mark 8.31f)

-He didn't treat everybody the same

Thomas John 20

<u>Sadly the original disciples are the only people to experience this unique way of life having Jesus walk beside them.</u>

<u>They expressed such grief, confusion and disillusion when he was about to leave- this too was a testament to the depth of their relational connection.</u>

- Jesus promised he was however sending someone else in his place 'The spirit'

John 14:15-17 "If you love me, obey[d] my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,[e] who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.[f] 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

John 20:22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

- the spirit will equip, guide, counsel, advocate, help, lead, empower

So what?

I think there are two powerful truths we need to take away from the revealing of Jesus/ God /Spirit as a friend

God/Jesus wants to walk beside you via the Spirit as a friend.

- never be alone
- always there to encourage you
- support you
- equip you
- guide you
- His desire is not just to have an obedient rule follower but to walk life in deep relational connection with someone he loves.

- foot prints poem

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was one only.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord,

"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, "The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

Relational stages

Mark Knapp's **Relational** Stages Model

Initiation	This stage is very short, sometimes as short as 10-15 seconds. In this stage, interactants are concerned with making favorable impressions on each other. They may use standard greetings or observe each other's appearance or mannerisms.
Experimenting	In the next stage, individuals ask questions of each other in order to gain information about them and decide if they wish to continue the relationship. "Many relationships progress no further than this point" 17.
Intensifying	Self-disclosure becomes more common in the intensifying stage. The relationship becomes less formal, the interactants begin to see each other as individuals, and statements are made about the level of commitment each has to the relationship.
Integrating	The individuals become a pair in the integrating stage. They begin to do things together and, importantly, others come to see them as a pair. A shared relational identity starts to form in this stage.
Bonding	During the bonding stage, a formal, sometimes legal, announcement of the relationship is made. Examples include a marriage, "best friend" ritual, or business partnership agreement. Few relationships reach this level.

- where would you say you are at with your friendship with Jesus?
- Its ok if you are new on your journey to be in the early parts
- its weird if you have been following Jesus for 10 yeas and are still experimenting with him

- Story_ me- like all good friendships it takes time to get to know each other- don't put to much pressure on yourself

How do we develop our friendship with Jesus?

like all relationships- intentional, prioritised time!

Jesus best embodied how you display the heart of God to people 'if you have seen me you've seen the father' be a friend!

- The world doesn't want to be preached at, your friends that you dearly love don't want to be judged all the time

People need people to walk with them, along side them, to love them despite and love them because We love them as a friend not we put up with them because our friend God loves them